

**#ShiftThePower**

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# **LOCALISATION AGENDA, SHIFT THE POWER AND AFRICAN PHILANTHROPIC MODELS IN BURKINA FASO, GHANA, NIGERIA AND SENEGAL**

*Research commissioned by  
the West Africa Civil Society Institute  
in collaboration with the  
Global Fund for Community Foundations  
and support from the NEAR Network  
and Save the Children Denmark*



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# Localisation Agenda, Shift the Power and African Philanthropic Models in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal

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### About WACSI

The West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) was set up by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) in 2005 to strengthen the institutional and operational capacities of civil society in the West Africa based on critical needs assessments and consultations with key civil society constituents and policy makers.

WACSI's institutional strengthening approach has evolved and integrates the varying experiences of working with civil society organisations (CSOs) and development agencies. It is designed to assist an organisation and institution to engage in a process of assessments, reflection and improvement, which is aimed at enhanced performance and the achievement of set targets.

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#### Vision

A peaceful and prosperous West Africa where development is driven by its people.

#### Mission

We strengthen civil society in West Africa to be responsive, collaborative, representative, resilient and influential through knowledge sharing, learning, connecting and influencing.

### About Global Fund for Community Foundations

GFCF has been working with the global community philanthropy field since 2006 and are all about building networks with like-minded organisations that see the power of people-led development.

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#### Vision

Empowered and resilient communities, working in an inclusive manner, using asset mobilisation to drive their own long-term development.

#### Mission

To support a global movement of vibrant, resilient, and locally owned and directed community philanthropy organisations, mobilising and channeling resources and influence for progressive social change.



## Acknowledgements

In October 2020, the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI), the Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCF) and STAR Ghana Foundation, in partnership with the NEAR Network and Save the Children Denmark (funded by DANIDA), began an “innovation for localisation” initiative aimed at exploring the potential for scaling up community philanthropy in West Africa. This initiative also seeks to create an enabling environment that would facilitate the flow of funding (external and local) to local civil society.

The West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) embraces such collaborations. To ensure that this initiative durably contributes to promote the localisation agenda and scales up local philanthropy it was necessary to understand the state of local philanthropy in the region. Hence, the essence of this study cannot be overemphasised in this regard.

Recognising WACSI’s keen interest to ensure that civil society in West Africa is sustainable, the need to understand the role of local philanthropy to this end cannot be undermined. The Institute therefore commissioned this study with the hope of gaining a better understanding of the understanding and practice of local philanthropy in the region as well as the place of the localisation agenda in contributing to alleviate humanitarian plights in the region.

I owe much thanks to all stakeholders who made invaluable contributions towards the realisation of this piece of work for the sector.

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Nana Asantewa Afadzinu

Executive Director

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>ABF</b>	Association Burkinabè de Fundraising
<b>CBOs</b>	Community-Based Organisations
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease-19
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organisations
<b>GFCF</b>	Global Fund for Community Foundations
<b>HNWIs</b>	High Net-Worth Individuals
<b>INGOs</b>	International Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>IPBF</b>	Initiative Pananetugri pour le Bien-être de la Femme
<b>KCDF</b>	Kenya Community Development Foundation
<b>WACSI</b>	West Africa Civil Society Institute



## Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from a qualitative empirical research undertaken by the West Africa Civil Society Institute and Global Fund for Community Philanthropy aimed at understanding localisation agenda and shift the power as mechanisms to strengthen power and resource flow to local and local civil society organisations (CSOs) working in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal. The report also seeks to develop a better understanding of how African CSOs including philanthropic organisations understand localisation agenda and shift the power, and to support growing efforts to build a future of increased localised humanitarian action and a balanced power where there is equal opportunities and well-balanced resource between donors and CSOs in the humanitarian aid system. The report further examines the role of African philanthropic organisations and the added value and challenges of pooled or intermediary funding mechanisms in promoting the localisation agenda and shift the power.

This report draws on data from semi-structured interviews conducted with sixteen participants who are experts and professionals working within the development and humanitarian aid sectors. The participants were drawn from CSOs including philanthropic organisations at three geographical levels: Global, Africa and West Africa.

The report finds a high degree of awareness and understanding on the part of participants on the localisation agenda. In particular, understandings of the localisation agenda revolve around three main issues: empowerment of local organisations through the strengthening of capacity and agency of CSOs; gathering support from below and creating spaces for local ownership of development interventions; and partnerships where local CSOs play significant roles in leading and coordinating projects and programmes. The findings in this report demonstrate that although the effective implementation of the localisation agenda have the potential of promoting well-balanced power dynamic, enhancing opportunities for co-creation of ideas between organisations based in the Global North and South, fostering equitable partnership and increasing organisational capacity, the actualisation of the localisation agenda is yet to be realised in the Global South. The study further highlights that the localisation agenda has the potential of downplaying or undermining the agency of Southern-based organisations by focusing largely on the structuring effects of the aid system.

The report findings highlight multiple separate but related narratives on the topic of “shifting power.” These include those that have emerged predominantly from within and regard to the transformation of the mainstream aid system (e.g., “Shifting the Power,” “Power Shifts” and “Power Shift”), and “#ShiftThePower,” whose origins are more closely associated the experiences and emergent practices of civil society organisations in the Global South. A key objective of the #ShiftThePower movement is to tip the balance of power by promoting a fairer and more equitable global system of people-centred development. In addition to advocacy at the global level, #ShiftThePower is as much focused on the importance of strengthening the credibility, legitimacy and the sustainability of local civil society actors through building trust with and mobilising resources with community members and the public in general and, in turn, addressing the power imbalances within and between governments and CSOs in the Global South. It is clear that conversations around shifting power and the localisation agenda are increasingly interconnected.

Moreover, the empirical evidence from this report suggests that domestic resource mobilisation is key to promoting both the localisation agenda and shift the power. Nevertheless, the space for domestic resource mobilisation among local CSOs appeared to have been hampered by the lack of effective leadership and capacity of local CSOs to mobilise domestic resources, as well as the absence of legal and regulatory frameworks for promoting domestic giving.

The report further finds that although the localisation and shift the power have the potential of contributing to equitable partnership, balanced power, resource flows, greater recognition of the value, expertise and relevance of local CSOs, the ways in which the current humanitarian aid architecture is structured is likely to shape and affect their effective actualisation. The report shows that that the lack of recognition of local CSOs knowledge and expertise in agenda setting, unequal power relations between Northern-based and Southern-based organisations, donor preference for funding INGOs rather local CSOs which are central characteristics of the current aid system are likely to negatively shape the effective implementation of the localisation agenda and shift the power among local CSOs in the Global South.



It is also clearly evident in this report that while African philanthropic organisations including private foundations by high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) and corporate organisations could serve as alternative routes for domestic resource mobilisation to pursue the localisation agenda and shift the power, the lack of resources by African philanthropic organisations to effectively support different initiatives of local CSOs coupled the absence of an enabling environment that fosters or promotes local giving culture are key limitations. In addition, the existence of relatively weak collaboration between private and corporate foundations and CSOs negatively affects efforts to promote the localisation agenda and shift the power.

The report also brings into sharp focus the essential roles of donors, government and Southern-based organisations in supporting and promoting the localisation and shift the power. The key roles for donors identified encompass: establishing flexible funding mechanisms; giving recognition to Southern-based organisations as equal partners; promoting organisational learning into grant-making processes; and creating avenues for the participation of Southern-based organisations in agenda setting, decision making and project design and implementation. Governments in the Global South also have an important role to play by creating the enabling environment that supports and promotes the growth of local giving through effective legal and regulatory frameworks such as tax rebates and exemptions. The report further finds that capacity strengthening, continuous learning, networking and increasing the voices of Southern-based CSOs are fundamental to efforts to promote the localisation agenda and shift the power.

Furthermore, the report finds that while pooled or intermediary funding mechanisms have the potential to promote shift the power, the lack of perceived flexibility especially with regards to funding arrangements serve as a key challenge. Pooled funding mechanisms often also tend to focus on specific thematic issues which in turn affects the reach and scope of their interventions.

Based on these emerging findings, the report highlights four overarching recommendations in promoting the localisation agenda and shift the power. First, is the need for developing mechanisms (e.g., ensuring mutual trust and respect and recognising the context within which partners operate) to change asymmetrical power relations between donors and their partners. Second, increasing awareness and education through research and campaigns on the localisation agenda and shift the power. Third, strengthening the capacity of Southern-based organisations, especially in domestic resource mobilisation and organisational learning. Lastly, creating the enabling environment for local philanthropy will go a long way in promoting the localisation agenda and shift the power.







Photo by Akash Banerjee (Unsplash)

## 1.0 Introduction

Following the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the debate about the localisation agenda has gained traction in the humanitarian sector. The localisation agenda in particular emphasises the need for equitable and balanced humanitarian regime, where the role of local and national actors is recognised, valued and supported by donors, humanitarian agencies and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs). The goal of the localisation agenda is to improve the overall humanitarian system, and ensure efficient and fast delivery, quality, impactful and sustainable humanitarian action that are efficient and meets the needs of intended beneficiaries. The central role of local actors in achieving these outcomes has long been recognised (Krause, 2014; Pincock et al., 2021; Gomez, 2021). With their unique strengths of strong understanding of local contextual circumstances, politics and culture, proximity, timely response, and cost-effectiveness in delivering interventions, local communities and institutions are better placed to deliver critical intervention to those in need (Bakarat and Milton, 2020; Bakarat and Abunimer, 2020; van den Boss, 2021). With growing debates and contestations surrounding the current humanitarian system and its underpinnings (see for example, Roepstorff, 2020; Pincock et al., 2021), actors within the development ecosystem are becoming increasingly interested in knowing the opportunities, challenges and best practices on the relationship between donors, INGOs and local civil society organisations (CSOs), and the most effective ways to enhance the localisation agenda to ensure that resources and power flow

directly to local and national CSOs in the Global South. In doing so, the aim is to put the 'local actors' at the centre of development work (Hodgson, 2020; Al-Abdeh and Patel, 2019).

Directly related with the localisation agenda, the recent years have seen an increasing emphasis on the need to reform aid system's structure, culture and practices particularly with regards to challenging and changing existing power dynamics (Knight, 2019; Bond, 2021; Hodgson, 2020). This has led to critical voices demanding that development be done differently (see for example, Honig and Gulrajani, 2018). For this reason, #ShiftThePower campaign which seeks to challenge and reform the practices of development aid and institutional philanthropy by advocating for a "more equitable people-based development" has been gaining momentum since 2016 (Knight, 2019:5; Hodgson, 2020; Bond, 2021:4). The hashtag #ShiftThePower emerged out of the Global Summit on Community Philanthropy organised by the Global Fund for Community Foundations in Johannesburg in December 2016. This summit brought together about 350 representatives from community foundations, grassroots grantmakers, women's fund, environmental funds and other kinds of community development foundations in more than 60 countries to explore pathways of promoting more equitable people-led development. This involves transferring power from **"top-down system of development and philanthropy"** to local communities and institutions to drive their own development processes (Hodgson, 2018; Hodgson, 2020).

<sup>1</sup> For more details on the localisation agenda, see <https://charter4change.org/>

<sup>2</sup> See <https://buildingstatecapability.com/the-ddd-manifesto/>

<sup>3</sup> For details on the Summit, see <https://globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/news/global-summit-on-community-philanthropy-inspires-movement-to/>

<sup>4</sup> See <https://buildingstatecapability.com/the-ddd-manifesto/>



The increasing emphasis on need to do development differently is informed the fact that many development interventions tend to have limited impact due to the complexity and the lack of involvement of local communities and institutions in the development process because they often lack power despite their local contextual knowledge and understanding of local realities . In fact, as Knight (2019:5) argues **“well-meaning external interventions into communities commonly yield results that local people don’t want”**. Against backdrop, initiatives such as the #ShiftThePower seek to tip the balance of power in the development sector by promoting a fairer and more equitable people-centred development . In doing so, it emphasises on the need to transfer power to local communities and institutions which creates opportunities for equal partnerships and recognition of Southern-based organisations and communities as ‘co-creators’ rather than ‘project implementors and beneficiaries’ of development interventions provided by Northern-based organisations.

While acknowledging that the localisation agenda and #ShiftThePower seek to put the ‘local’ at the heart of development work, other initiatives such as the Shifting the Power project and Power Shifts project also aim to promote a more balanced humanitarian system by recognising and valuing the role of local and national humanitarian actors. However, while acknowledging the similarities in terminologies between #ShiftThePower, Shifting the Power and Power Shifts, the focus of this study is on #ShiftThePower. In fact, the key differences in these terminologies are that #ShiftThePower is a campaign or movement that focuses on reforming the practice of development aid and institutional philanthropy. Moreover, #ShiftThePower seeks to promote and celebrate emergent practices and alternatives such as community and participatory philanthropy as opposed to the dominant top-down development paradigm. In doing so, the aim is to promote a “new paradigm of people-led development” (Hodgson, 2020:100). On the other hand, Shifting the Power and Power Shifts narratives focus on influencing international development actors in the humanitarian system. These initiatives are led primarily by international NGOs (i.e., ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Concern, Oxfam and Tearfund . Against this background, this research was commissioned by the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) and the Global Fund for Community Foundation (GFCF), as part of a larger project on “Innovation for Localisation” conducted

5 <https://shiftthepower.org/about-us/>

6 For details, see <https://startnetwork.org/resource/localisation-aid-are-in-gos-walking-talk>



in partnership with the Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR Network) and Save the Children Denmark. This report aims to presents the findings of the research conducted on the aid localisation agenda and shift the power as mechanisms to strengthen power and resource flow to local and national CSOs in West Africa specifically in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal . The objective was to develop a better understanding of African CSOs including philanthropic organisations’ perspectives on aid localisation agenda and #ShiftThePower, and to support growing efforts to build a future of increased localised humanitarian action and a balanced power where there is equal opportunities and well-balanced resource between donors and CSOs in the humanitarian aid system.

The report focuses on documenting perspectives on aid localisation agenda, shift the power as well as the added value and challenges of pooled funding mechanisms. The report draws extensively on qualitative interviews conducted with sixteen participants who are experts and professionals working within the development and humanitarian aid sectors. The participants were drawn from CSOs including philanthropic organisations at three geographical levels: Global, Africa and West Africa.

The report is structured as follows. The first part provides the background of the assignment including the context of the project, goal, rationale

7 <https://oxfamapps.org/fp2p/new-powershift-resources/>







Photo by Matthew Spiteri (Unsplash)

**“well-meaning external interventions into communities commonly yield results that local people don’t want”**

and objectives guiding the research. Next, it presents the overall methodology focusing on the research design, data collection methods and the selected participants, as well as the limitations of the research. The penultimate section presents the analysis of the findings focusing on: i) prospects and challenges in executing the localisation agenda, ii) awareness and understandings of shift the power and the roles and capacity of African philanthropic organisations in promoting a balanced or equitable relationship with donors; and iii) the added value and challenges of pooled funding mechanisms in promoting the localisation and shift the power agendas. The last section concludes by summarising the key findings derived from the research, highlighting their policy implications.

8 see <https://startnetwork.org/resource/localisation-aid-are-ingos-walking-talk>.

9 Other activities within the scope of the project included the piloting of grassroots grant making and community philanthropy mechanisms in Somalia (NEAR Network) and Ghana (STAR Ghana Foundation).

10 It is important to mention that although the focus of the study was on #ShiftThePower which is about reforming the practices of development aid and philanthropy in order to tip the balance of power by promoting people-led development, this was not made explicit or explained to the research participants. For this reason, the understanding and meaning of shift the power was left open to the interpretations and meanings offered by the participants. The aim was to understand how the participants framed and understood the term.



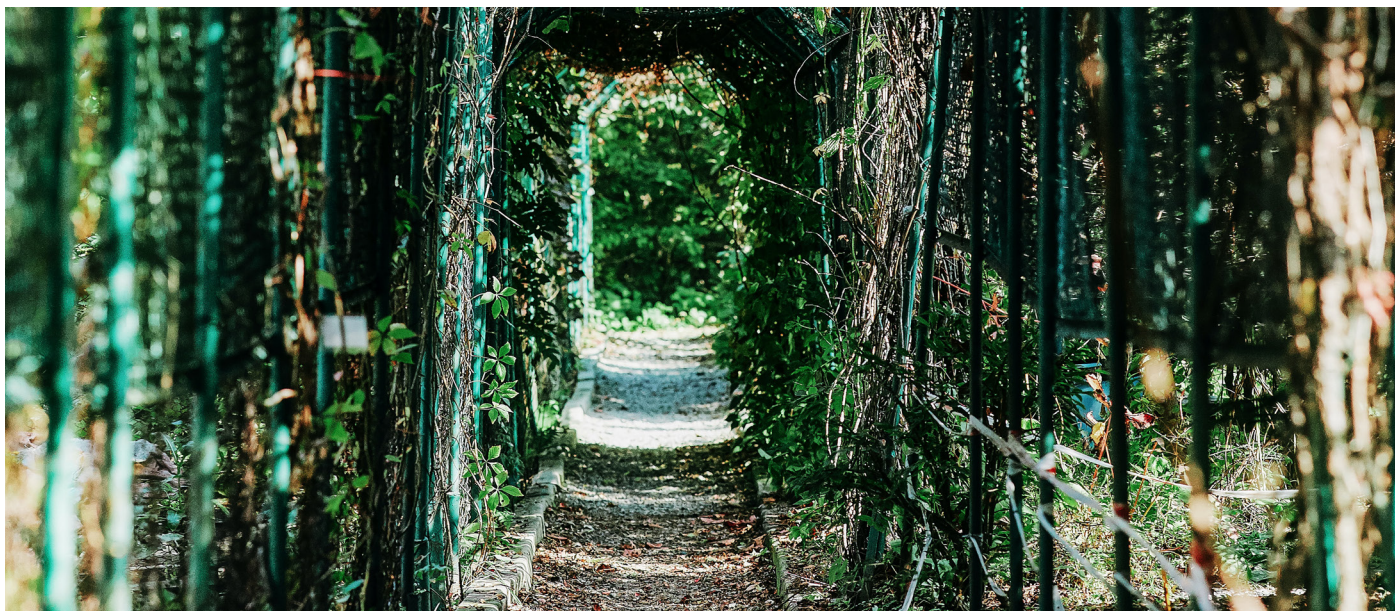


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## 2.0 Background to Study

For decades, humanitarian aid has continued to save lives, alleviate poverty and suffering for many men, women and children after disaster (Davey, 2013; Van Brabant and Patel, 2018; Krause, 2014). Local organisations (which include CSOs) also called local actors, play a critical role in responding to humanitarian crises (Tewa and Nagarik Aawaz, 2016; van den Boss, 2021; Wall and Hedlund, 2016). For instance, Tewa and Nagarik Aawaz (2016) document how community philanthropy organisations due to their deep local knowledge, strong local ties and relationships were able to play crucial roles in informing policy and decision-making processes following the 2015 earthquake in Nepal. Local organisations therefore have direct access and network to meet the needs of those who have been affected by disasters. They know and understand the local context, hence can quickly identify and respond to urgent humanitarian needs. Thus, local actors are the key instruments needed to sustain humanitarian responses (Wall and Hedlund, 2016; Roepstorff, 2020; Ward, 2020). As highlighted in the case of the Bhaktapur community in Nepal, the community members came together to help one another and demonstrated an increased sense of social responsibility (Tewa and Nagarik Aawaz, 2016). More importantly, community giving and support has been an important safety nets especially in contexts where government's service delivery has been inadequate and play significant roles in responding to the emergency needs of households. In this regard, people help each other by sharing resources for the common good (see for example, Doan, 2019; Hodgson, 2020).

However, for a long time, donors seem to have failed to recognise and appreciate the crucial place and role of local organisations including community philanthropic organisations in delivering direct response actions to victims of humanitarian disasters. Although, the extant literature documents how social capital helps in bringing community members together and also enhance their capacity for post-disaster recovery (Aldrich and Meyer, 2015; Hwang and Joo, 2021), the majority of humanitarian aid is often channelled through INGOs, a multilateral agency or a United Nations (UN) agency before reaching local organisations. In some cases, the funds are sub granted to local organisations while in other instances, humanitarian support programmes are sub-contracted to local actors or worst off, local actors are used as implementing agents (Krause, 2014).

Over time, global conversations have emerged to shift this sub-contractual relationship between local and international organisations. Global initiatives such as the Grand Bargain commitment at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit was signed by global humanitarian actors to change working practices to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian aid system (Austin et al., 2019; Roepstorff, 2020).

Among the provisions in the commitment include; providing more support and funding to local and national actors, promoting equal partnerships, ensuring better integration with local coordination mechanisms, providing more support for the long-term institutional capacity of local and national actors, and dedicating an aggregate target of 25% of global humanitarian funding to be channelled







as directly as possible to local and national actors by 2020 (Overseas Development Institute, 2019; Roepstorff, 2020). The Charter4Change which is an initiative by humanitarian NGOs also seeks to increase funding to directly to Southern-based NGOs for humanitarian action by 20% until 2018.

Among other things, the Charter4Change seeks to increase transparency around resource transfers to southern-based national and local NGOs, promote the direct involvement of local partners in the design and implementation of projects, increase the public visibility of local partners through better communication and strengthen the capacity of local partners. To materialise these commitments, localisation initiatives including Shifting the Power, Power Shifts Project and Charter4Change (see for example, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2018a; Atrakouti, 2019; GFCF, 2018), came to the fore and have sought to change the working relationships between the actors and shift resources directly to the organisations on the ground in providing humanitarian assistance. However, the extent to which these mechanisms contribute to influencing the power dynamics and ensure a fair play between the actors and available resources in the humanitarian ecosystem in Africa remains questionable. This therefore necessitates an urgent need for the current status quo to be interrogated in view of highlighting the gaps and proffering feasible ways of bridging the power and resource divide within the ecosystem. This study as part of the Building Bridges Project also seeks to provide answers to the underlying reasons why the localisation agenda has not been able to achieve its objectives and discusses efforts to address the gaps within the global aid system that account for such failures. The scope of the Building Bridges Project is discussed below.

## 2.1 Project rationale

In spite of the growing conversations and decisions

11 For details on the Charter4Change, see <https://charter4change.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/charter-for-change-july-20152.pdf>

12 See for example, <https://shiftthepower.org/about-us/>; <https://startnetwork.org/resource/localisation-aid-are-ingos-walking-talk>

to shift more resources and power to the actors on the ground, limited results have been realised in Africa. Localisation and conversations around “shifting power” within the dominant / mainstream system have, arguably, just become more of a mere conversation with no real results achieved. As observed by Degan Ali in her work in Kenya and Somalia in 2020, the flow of adequate funds directly to local organisations and a power transition away from international bodies were not evident. Ali argued that **“[localisation is] a lot of rhetoric — a lot of nice aspirational language, but no real action and substantive systems change”**. Commitments made under the Grand Bargain have also failed to meet their target. The expected 25% share of the global humanitarian funding directly to local and national actors in the Global South by 2020 has not been achieved (Roepstorff, 2020). As of 2019, less than 10% of funds have been released. In 2018, only 3.1% of the total humanitarian assistance went directly to local state and non-state actors. Even with this, local NGOs in the Global South received just about 0.4% of it, which was same in 2017 and 2016 (ALNAP, 2018). In the same vein, the Charter4Change initiative comprising of various humanitarian NGOs is intended to increase funding to local NGOs from the Global South by 20% until 2018 (Roepstorff, 2020). This promise too was largely not achieved. There is still inequality, power and resource imbalance between local NGOs and donors in the humanitarian system (Roepstorff, 2020; Pincock et al., 2021).

More importantly, in the humanitarian sector, although country-based pooled funding mechanisms are created mainly to make funding directly available to humanitarian partners at the country level, their design, structure and practices still prioritises funding to INGOs and multilateral agencies rather than local NGOs. For instance, in 2019, out of the total US\$ 817 million allocation made, INGOs and the United Nations received US\$ 388 million (47%) and US\$ 225 million (28%) respectively compared to US\$ 198 million (24%) for national NGOs (UNOCHA, 2020). Aside from the institutional pooled funding mechanism, local foundations (e.g., community foundations, private foundations etc.) that forms part of African philanthropy which are often locally initiated play significant roles in pooling funds and resources (e.g., financial and non-financial) together for humanitarian assistance. In fact, in countries like Nigeria, private foundations like the TY Danjuma Foundation and Aliko Dangote Foundation have

13 See <https://www.devex.com/news/is-it-finally-time-for-the-localization-agenda-to-take-off-97323>

14 See [https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/AboutCBPFs\\_2020\\_20200107\\_EN.pdf](https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/AboutCBPFs_2020_20200107_EN.pdf)



played instrumental roles in humanitarian responses (Moyo, 2011; Olanrewaju et al., 2019). In recent years, many community organisations including foundations have been growing, mobilising local resources and building local constituencies to be resilient (Agler, 2019). However, while pooled funding which forms part of the global aid system and community philanthropy (e.g., African philanthropic foundations such as community foundations) have their unique roles to play within the humanitarian sector, these pooled funding mechanisms rarely meet as partners in the humanitarian space.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has also worsened the weak relationships between and Southern and Northern actors in the humanitarian space (Green 2020; EpicAfrica and African NGOs, 2020). Apparently, more efforts need to be made for resources to easily flow directly to the local organisations. As Svoboda puts it: “efforts should be made to ensure that equitable and genuine partnerships between international organisations and local organisations are developed in light of the localisation of aid agenda, rather than ones that see locals engaged as simply implementing partners” (Svoboda, 2018).

Trustworthy efforts and urgent actions are needed to ensure equitable and genuine partnerships between international organisations and local organisations. If these are to be realised, what will it take? What are the pathways that need to be forged? What arguments need to be made? What evidence needs to be collected, and which gaps in the system need to be bridged for us to see the change we want – that is, a humanitarian ecosystem in which local actors and organisations enjoy equal partnerships, opportunities and access to an equitable proportion of resources that will enable them to realise the humanitarian goals they set for themselves.

## 2.2 Project goal

In an effort to promote cooperation and collaborative effort in shifting resources to local actors, the Global Fund for Community Foundations, West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) and STAR Ghana Foundation initiated the–Building Equal Bridges– project to scrutinise/assess the power dynamics among actors (local and international) and re-examine the resources share between local actors/ non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) in the humanitarian sector in Africa. The

project forms part of a larger initiative focused on innovation in the localisation sphere, with the support and involvement of the NEAR Network and Save the Children Denmark.

## 2.3 Project objectives

Specifically, the project seeks to:

1. Understand the current status of the power and resource dynamics within the humanitarian sector in Africa.
2. Promote an innovative model of collaboration that fosters equality among partners and encourages an equitable resource distribution in efforts to address humanitarian crises.
3. Explore innovative ways of boosting the visibility of all actors within the humanitarian sector in Africa and facilitating collaboration among them.
4. Facilitate open engagements, equal collaboration among stakeholders in the humanitarian sector in Africa to understand their perspectives, approaches in addressing humanitarian challenges.

**“[localisation is] a lot of rhetoric — a lot of nice aspirational language, but no real action and substantive systems change”**

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.devex.com/news/are-local-and-international-aid-worker-disparities-worsening-under-covid-19-97099>





Photo by Alex Radelich (Unsplash)

### 3.0 Research Methodology

This section discusses the methodology employed in this study by focusing on the study design, sampling, data collection and data analysis. The limitations of the study are also discussed.

#### 3.1 Study design

The research employed qualitative research design involving the use of semi-structured interviews with 18 key informants working in the humanitarian aid and civil society sectors (see Appendix 1 for the list of interviewees). The study also drew insights from a webinar: “The localisation agenda: Questioning the intermediary donor system” organised by WACSI and GFCF on 29th April 2021. The qualitative research approach is deemed useful when one wants to explore and gain an in-depth picture of the meanings and subjective views that individuals or groups ascribe to a social phenomenon. The qualitative design allowed us to gain useful insight into the rich and complex understandings of the selected participants concerning their knowledge and experiences with the notion of the localisation agenda, and the roles and challenges of African philanthropy in promoting the shift the power agenda. It is worth mentioning that although this study sought to explore how the participants framed and understood the localisation agenda and #ShiftThePower, the definition of these terminologies was left open in order for participants to interpret the terms based on their own perspectives rather than following a predetermined definition.

The aim was to understand how participants understood and defined the localisation agenda and #ShiftThePower. This was also a useful mechanism for assessing the level of participants’ knowledge awareness of these terminologies. Moreover, an important consideration that informed the use of qualitative research design was the need to also gain in-depth representation of the experiences of the key informants regarding the dynamics of pooled funding mechanisms, as well as the approaches and efforts of philanthropic organisations to promote flexibility in funding, issues with domestic resource mobilisation for CSOs, relationship between CSOs and African Philanthropic organisations and the lessons for government and donors in supporting local philanthropy.

#### 3.2 Data collection instruments and participants

The research began with an online search and review of the project’s concept notes, as well as grey and academic literature to better appreciate and understand the localisation agenda, shift the power, power dynamics in the humanitarian aid sector, issues relating to domestic resource mobilisation and mechanisms to increase resource flows to the Global South. The lessons learnt from the review were useful in constructing the semi-structured interview guides. In all, eighteen (18) key informants working in the humanitarian sector and CSOs were purposively selected to participate in the study. The selected participants were deemed as information rich-case and reflected the diversity



of organisations including philanthropic foundations and humanitarian organisations working at the global, regional and national levels (see Appendix for the list of participants and their organisations). The participants were selected from Nigeria (Nigeria Network of NGOs, Philanthropy Circuit-Nigeria, INGO Forum-Nigeria, Stakeholder Democracy Network and We the People), Ghana (STAR-Ghana Foundation, Newmont Ahafo Development Foundation and WACSI), Burkina Faso (Initiative Pananetugri pour le Bien-être de la Femme (IPBF) and Association Burkinabè de Fundraising (ABF)), Sierra Leone (Purposeful Sierra Leone).

Aside from the four case studies, key informants with knowledge and experience on localisation agenda and shift the power were selected from South Africa (CIVICUS), Kenya (Kenyan Community Development Foundation), Cameroon (Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch), Togo (Ecobank Foundation) and Haiti (Haiti Community Foundation).

As noted earlier, a semi-structured interview guide was employed in soliciting the perspectives of research participants. The use of in-depth semi-structured interviews allowed us to gain deeper insights into the perspectives of the participants. The semi-structured interview guide was structured to elicit information on four broad issues:

- i)** Exploring opportunities and challenges in the execution of the localisation agenda;
- ii)** Roles and capacity of African philanthropic organisations in promoting a balanced or equitable relationship;
- iii)** Added value and challenges of pooled funding mechanism in promoting the shift the power and location agenda; and
- iv)** Mapping philanthropic models in West Africa. As mentioned earlier in Section 3.1, the interpretation and understanding of the localisation agenda and #ShiftThePower by the participants did not follow a predetermined definition. The participants interpreted these terms in their own ways and understanding. The same instrument and protocol were used in eliciting information from the perspective of the selected key informants. All the interviews were conducted through virtual means with the aid of the Zoom platform. This was necessary due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the need to observe all the protocols to halt the spread

of the pandemic. Before each interview, a statement of consent containing the objectives and purpose of the study were read to participants, and they were assured of their confidentiality and anonymity during the interview process. A high degree of flexibility was also exercised during the interview process. The majority of interviews were conducted in English with a few in French. Interviews lasted on average between 20 and 60 minutes. Permission was sought from all the interviewees to audio-record the interviews.

Aside from the semi-structure interviews, the report also draws on insights from a webinar that sought to critically discuss and explore how the intermediary structure within the philanthropy/donor funding system is altering the localisation agenda. More so, the webinar sought to identify and propose potential future pathways, practices and mechanisms that would see increased flows of resources to local actors and increased recognition of-and support in building local resources, knowledge, experience and assets, including local philanthropy. The webinar was organised virtually and took place on Zoom platform. There were four panel discussions and questions and answer sessions on localisation and the intermediary donor system. The webinar provided insightful perspectives on participants' understanding and experiences of the localisation agenda, shift the power, resource mobilisation, the role of intermediary organisations as well as how resources could be channelled to organisations in the Global South.

### 3.3 Data analysis and report writing

All the data gathered through the semi-structured interviews were fully transcribed. A coding frame which contained codes and sub-codes were developed from the interview transcripts and text chats in the webinar. The coding process, which was done manually, involved assigning words to phrases, quotations and chunks of the textual data, which helped sort, reduce and distil the content of the interviews. The coding process was iterative. It involved reading and re-reading the interview transcripts, revising, re-organising codes and relating the data to questions asked during the interviews.

The next step involved employing the thematic analysis technique to analyse the qualitative data. This technique focused on identifying and grouping closely related statements, expressions, concepts and patterns emerging from the interviewees'







responses to each question that was asked during the interview. This approach allowed us to identify the key themes emerging from the analysis. The next involved providing a descriptive and in-depth analysis of the themes generated from the interviews and text chats in the webinar to facilitate data analysis and report writing.

### 3.4 Study limitations

Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic which has disrupted social and economic lives, all the interviews were conducted using virtual means (i.e., Zoom platform). While this process allowed the research team to efficiently contact and interview selected participants, others could not respond or participate in the study. For instance, there were relatively fewer interviewees from Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone compared to Ghana and Nigeria. Moreover, challenges with internet connectivity sometimes disrupted the interview process. In such cases, follow up emails and calls were made to elicit any potential outstanding perspectives of the interviewees.

Another limitation relates to the timing and availability of interviewees. Generally, the researchers anticipated each interview lasting for up to one hour, and this was made clear to interviewees before the interviews. However, some interviewees, as a result of their busy work schedule could only be available for interview about 20 to 30 minutes. This had implications on the researchers' ability to ask all the planned questions on the interview guides. In cases like this, the salient and most important questions

were asked due to the limited time. For this reason, the questions on philanthropic models were less discussed by interviewees, hence there were scanty information for a detailed analysis of such issues.



Photo by Samuel Aboh





## 4.0 Research Findings

This section presents and discusses the key findings of this research based on the empirical evidence collected from interviewees. The analysis of the data is structured around six key themes: i) executing the localisation agenda: prospects and challenges; ii) perspectives on shift the power narratives; iii) role of African philanthropic organisations in promoting the shift the power agenda; iv) constraints inhibiting the promotion of the shift the power agenda; v) domestic resource mobilisation and shift the power; vi) pooled funding mechanisms and its relationship with the localisation agenda and shift the power narratives.

### 4.1 Executing the localisation agenda: prospects and challenges

The findings presented in this section focus on interviewees' understanding, knowledge and awareness of the localisation agenda. The discussion focuses on how interviewees made meaning and understood the localisation agenda including its prospects and challenges. As mentioned earlier in Section 3.1, interviewees interpreted the localisation agenda in their own ways rather than following a predetermined definition. The section starts by presenting the findings on the different meanings and understandings of the localisation agenda expressed by interviewees.

#### 4.1.1 Meanings, knowledge and awareness of the localisation agenda

The localisation agenda is increasingly becoming prominent in the international aid system (see for example, Emmens and Clayton, 2017; Barakat and Milton, 2020; Pincock et al., 2021; Roepstorff, 2020; Wall and Hedlund, 2016). The driving force for the localisation agenda as reflected in the narratives of interviewees revolves around increasing outcry of racial injustice, and the need to decolonise development. It is situated in contexts where Southern-based organisations are reflecting on how best to remain relevant in the ongoing political, economic, social and cultural changes in their field of operations. The research elicited the perspective of interviewees from the various CSOs on their awareness, knowledge and what the term aid localisation meant for them and their organisations.

A common theme that runs through the research is the high degree of awareness regarding the localisation agenda. Most interviewees affirmed to have heard of the localisation agenda. Many reported to have come to know the localisation agenda through their engagements in advocacy, capacity development, and service delivery work. Despite the commonality in awareness, different interpretations emerged in terms of how the interviewees understood the localisation agenda. The interview data suggests that the divergent understandings of the interviewees regarding the localisation agenda is linked in part to broader conceptualisation of aid localisation within





the existing research literature and practice (see for example, Wall and Hedlund, 2016; Emmens and Clayton, 2017; Barakat and Milton, 2021; Roepstorff, 2020). Three key themes emerged in relation to how interviewees framed their understanding of the localisation agenda: i) empowerment of local organisations (strengthening of agency and capacity of local CSOs), ii) gathering support from below and creating spaces for local ownership of development interventions; and iii) partnership (with local CSOs leading and coordinating projects and programmes).

### **Localisation agenda as empowerment of local organisations**

It emerged from the interviews that one key understanding of localisation is linked invariably to the notion of empowerment. Under this theme, key informants framed their understanding of the localisation agenda in terms of deepening and strengthening the agency, power and capacity of Southern-based organisations. They further emphasised the need for CSOs to come together as one unit to speak with a common voice against longstanding practices of, for example, the dominance of INGOs in the humanitarian aid system and the lack of recognition of local CSOs in the aid sector. They emphasised that the localisation agenda entails a shift in power or transfer of power away from international organisations based in the Global North to local groups of organisations at the local level to allow for such organisations to take the lead in the development process and delivery of interventions. It therefore entails shifting the balance of power and reversing the current paradigm where international actors dominate the whole aid architecture. Speaking about the meaning or his understanding of the localisation agenda, an interviewee explained:

**“It’s [the localisation agenda] about deepening and strengthening the agency, power and capacity of organisation rooted in the Global South. It’s about transferring power away from the Global North to imbed that power in local groups and organisations to take the lead in development process”.**

It was reported that capacity strengthening for CSOs as part of the localisation agenda ought to be holistic rather than a tokenistic exercise which has been the focus of much capacity strengthening initiatives for local CSOs in the Global South. One interviewee indicated that as part of the process of empowering



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local organisations, the localisation agenda should entail an increase (of up to 25%) in donor funding to local organisations as part of the Grand Bargain agreement. However, in reality, only about 5% of aid has been localised. The reasons for this were attributed to the perceived lack of credibility on the part of development partners in the Global South and the restrictive nature of funding which sometimes does not fit the context of local CSOs.

### **Localisation as local ownership and mutual partnership**

Another important finding emerging from the research on how the localisation agenda is understood among interviewees revolves around utilising local knowledge and ensuring local ownership of interventions. Key informants suggested that the localisation agenda is all about how support can be garnered locally from individuals, organisations and local communities to strengthen the work of CSOs to achieve desired impact as stated in the quote below:

**“My understanding of the localisation agenda is about how we the locals [Ghanaians] support some of the works that NGOs do instead of depending solely on international organisations [...] I believe it is about time we look at this and find ways of supporting CSOs operating within the country”**



Other interviewees framed their understanding of the localisation agenda in terms of partnership. Thus, it revolves around how humanitarian organisations at global, national and local levels increasingly need to be treated as equal partners in initiating development interventions. However, it emerged that within this partnership, the role of local organisations in leading, coordinating and bringing their local knowledge and expertise in the execution of projects is crucial. This is evident in the quote below:

**“The localisation agenda is a call from local and national actors that the humanitarian system basically, treats them more as equals in line with the outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit which recognises the role of the locals as crucial stakeholders in humanitarian action. It’s this notion of shifting the balance and that donors and INGOs should not be the ones coming in and dominating the whole aid system in the Global South. They should be working to complement and strengthen the long-term growth of the local actors”.**

Although the localisation agenda has come to mean strengthening the leading and coordinating role of local organisations in development interventions in the Global South, in reality, however, interviewees suggested that the localisation agenda has been reduced to mean foreign organisations localising their operations without the active participation or involvement of local level actors including local CSOs. Hence, the use of local knowledge in development interventions is relegated to the background. One interviewee for instance noted that the pendulum of the localisation agenda as it is being practiced currently focuses on **“how institutions in the Global North are taking over development in countries in the Global South often through the mobilisation of local resources”**.

Moreover, there were concerns from some interviewees that the idea of the localisation agenda is outmoded because it is largely driven by local CSOs in the humanitarian sector. This view was framed from the perspective that the agenda tends to victimise local CSOs in their relationship with donors based in the Global North. On this basis, a section of interviewees called for the need to focus more on the agency of Southern-based CSOs rather than the Northern donors. They argued that the focus should be on changing local communities, actors and political representatives rather than giving much attention to actors and donors in the

Global North on whom local organisations may have little or no influence in changing their operational activities.

#### 4.1.2 Effects of the localisation agenda on organisations in the Global South

A handful of the interviewees responded to the question on how the localisation agenda could impact on CSOs in the Global South. Analysis of the data on this subject reveal contrasting perspectives. On the one hand, the data suggests that the localisation agenda is one sure way of enhancing credibility in the aid architecture, increase capacity, foster greater partnership and collaborations, as well as ensure a more balanced power relations between Southern-based and Northern-based organisations. According to a section of interviewees, the localisation agenda provides opportunities for local actors in the Global South to co-create projects and programmes with organisations in the Global North. This is particularly so given that the localisation agenda increasingly emphasises the need for the involvement of local actors in the design and implementation of development interventions:

**“If the actual goal of the localisation agenda, were to be actualised, it would help [because] it will bring a sense of credibility. It would also come with increased capacity and foster greater partnerships and collaborations. This would not be an imbalanced relationship between a giver and a recipient which we tend to see now [...] With the localisation agenda, there is more opportunity to co-create and achieve equal power relations which will also foster greater programme implementation and create access to resource mobilisation in the long-run”.**

Another interviewee also narrated:

If the localisation agenda is implemented properly, I think that it will strengthen the sector, especially when it is done with the small and medium-size non-profits in mind [...] From my own readings, the localisation agenda should be a comprehensive agenda that is not tokenistic.

On the other hand, rather than promoting the interest of local organisations, some interviewees narrated that the true meaning of the localisation agenda is yet to materialise especially in Africa. Instead, the practice has been that INGOs will open new branches in the Global South and label such as localisation. This practice has led to continuous

<sup>16</sup> See <https://www.globalinnovation.fund/who-we-are/about-us/> for the details on the Global Innovation Fund







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power struggles between INGOs and local NGOs. One interviewee lamented about the practice of INGOs relocating their headquarters to countries in the Global South:

**“I think the results [of the localisation agenda] have been disappointing because, you have a lot of different players that are trying to push the localisation agenda. We have an issue because many international organisations like INGOs are relocating their operations or headquarters to the Global South. They are talking about this as if it was the localisation agenda. Some Global North funders are talking about labelling this practice as the localisation agenda. So, I think this is where it gets dangerous because what it means is that, you’re talking about power struggles”.**

Another respondent from the webinar shared her experience of the localisation agenda by stating that:

**“Localisation also isn’t something that came from partner communities [i.e., organisations in the Global South such as local CSOs]. It came from the Northern institutions. So, in that regard,**

**it doesn’t really reflect partners’ capabilities. The term itself is null and void. It’s also an agenda we in the Global South are being forced to push, when many of us simply want to just get on with our work and be credited for the change we bring in our own communities”.**

#### **4.2. Domestic resource mobilisation, funding CSOs in the Global South and localisation agenda**

This section provides an analysis and discussions of the findings on the current state of humanitarian sector and what is needed to engender structural change to ensure a more balanced power and resource flow to organisations in the Global South.

##### **4.2.1 Promoting structural change in humanitarian aid sector**

A clear and obvious finding from the research is that the current humanitarian aid sector is characterised by power imbalances between donors, INGOs and local CSOs. Interviewees framed the current aid system as fashioned with colonial mentality, white supremacy and the “need to help the Global South”. The fact that donors and INGOs view themselves as experts and approach humanitarian assistance as a form of giving handouts has led to a situation where local CSOs’ values, experiences and knowledge are largely not recognised. This contributes to the imposition of donor priorities and frameworks on local partners in the Global South as explained by an interviewee:

The humanitarian sector is still colonial and it is framed in power imbalance between the North and the South. This is because of the resource dependency of the Global South on the Global North.

Closely linked to the power imbalance is the skewness of donor funding to INGOs rather than direct funding to local CSOs. And this is happening at the same time while there is growing decline in humanitarian support and funding for local CSOs (see for example, UNOCHA, 2020). The restrictions in funding flows are happening at the same time while many INGOs that have access to donor funding are unwilling to co-create ideas and work with organisations in the Global South as explained by interviewees.

Despite the less positive issues discussed above, there was a notable recognition of a number of innovations particularly among local CSOs to raise financial and non-financial resources and deliver on



projects and programmes to better serve the needs of communities in the era of COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, it was mentioned that some donors are increasingly providing funding to CSOs to address the multi-dimensional challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, interviewees acknowledged the existence of multi-purpose local funds such as 'the Global Innovation Fund to support local CSOs in the Global South'.

#### 4.2.2 Engendering structural changes in the humanitarian aid system

Several suggestions were made by interviewees as key starting points to wider discussions to engender structural changes or transformation in the current humanitarian aid system. The first relates to the need to develop genuine partnerships between donors, INGOs and local CSOs in the design and implementation of development programmes and projects. For this to happen, interviewees explained that it requires calls for donors and INGOs to change their "colonial mindset" that CSOs in the Global South do not have the absorptive capacity or the required capacity to manage their grants and its related projects. Hence, INGOs have to dictate the development priorities and the with which they are to be delivered. Interviewees expressed the view

that developing genuine partnership in the co-creation of development interventions should entail recognising the views and expertise of local CSOs. An interviewee emphasised that partnership should be characterised by respect, and recognition of the value, experiences and views of CSOs in the Global South:

**"If it is going to be partnership-based, we must also respect each other [...] We have seen a lot of disrespect by INGOs towards local CSOs and that in itself is creating some tension. We have that this is because the local CSOs do not have the capacity and that's why the INGOs would come in and manage projects and all that. But then you say ask yourself: if they don't have the capacity, why not invest in them to give the capacity to be able to be at par?"**

Another interviewee highlighted the need to develop multiple levels of partnerships in order to bring about transformation in the humanitarian aid sector:

**"First there is the need to create allies in both the Global North and Global South. And also, to create platforms for learning, knowledge management and sharing because this will foster collaborations or partnerships. And when these actions begin to take place, it creates opportunities for co-creation between development actors here in the Global South and the Global North".**

A similar sentiment was shared by a participant in the webinar who argued about the need for genuine partnership and commitment by actors in the humanitarian aid sector in order to bring about structural change between Northern-based organisations and their Southern counterparts: **"humanitarian actors need to commit and act genuinely to address the persistent and structural barriers".**

At its core, the interviewee data suggests that the development of donor - local CSO relationship also calls for greater consultation of local CSOs in shaping development strategies and interventions at the country rather than reliance on external expertise in policy formulation and implementation. Thus, it involves an appreciation of the expertise of the local development actors. Second, changing the current humanitarian aid sector calls for a holistic CSO sector-wide assessment and response. Three key issues were identified by interviewees as crucial here. First, is the need for local CSOs to develop



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effective community mobilisation strategies and mechanisms, creation of avenues for knowledge sharing, continuous learning and human resource capacity strengthening. Second, is the need for open forum where CSOs will be empowered to question, discuss, analyse and proffer solutions to the existing power dynamics between the institutions in the Global North and their counterparts in the Global South. Third, is the need for CSOs to undertake critical organisational self-reflection to longstanding barriers to scaling up projects and achieving desired impacts. Interviewees further recognised the need for capacity strengthening by the CSOs themselves:

**“We need a sector-wide response. But that sector-wide response also depends on the ability of local CSOs to build their own capacity without having to wait for donors. I always say to my colleagues that rather than paying attention to the politics of civil society, why not pay attention to the technicalities by building capacities that can make you stand amongst your peers and also be able to add value to conversations around policy and implementation?”**

Moreover, engendering structural transformation in the aid sector requires CSOs in the Global South to become more transparent and accountable to their intended beneficiaries. According to many interviewees, there is the that the CSO sector in the Global South is a haven for embezzlement of donor funds, and many lack credibility, transparency and accountability. This is also because of the lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms on the part of the regulatory agencies to ensure proper accountability. These issues may have implications on the entire CSO sector and therefore deserves urgent attention as seen in the quote below:

**“There is also the perception that funding to CSOs will not be used for the right purposes. This raises questions about issues such as accountability and transparency on the part of CSOs in the Global South. There is therefore the need for downward accountability by CSOs because for many CSOs, once they get the money, you may not see them again. We need to work to change these issues which affect the CSO sector”.**

#### 4.3 Best practices for promoting the localisation agenda

The research also elicited the perspectives of the interviewees on best practices and lessons for promoting the localisation agenda. The recommended best practices for promoting the localisation agenda as demonstrated in the views of the interviewees revolved around the role of government, international development actors and donors, as well as local CSOs and the interplay between them. For this reason, analysis of the findings on how to promote the localisation agenda has been organised around three core areas: i) role of donors/INGOs; ii) role of government in the global south; and iii) the role of local CSOs.

##### 4.3.1 Best practices for donors to promote the localisation agenda

To begin with, interviewees provided a number of recommended best practices that donors must do to promote the localisation agenda.

The first relates to the need for donors to change their perspectives and orientation. It was remarked upon by many interviewees on the need to shift the relationship between donors/INGOs and local CSOs, from what could be described currently as ‘grant-





making' (which can be more instrumental in nature) to recognising local CSOs as key development partners. This should be accompanied by incorporating organisational learning into grant-making processes and donors changing their orientation towards the position of Southern-based organisations.

I think it is important for donors to change their style and orientation and the way they want to give aid. And for me, I'd rather be poorer than receive money which kills my mind or kills my capacity independence as a thoughtful person. It is very important that we continue to educate, or to help funders understand the way they give is as important as their money. And maybe they should keep it if they don't want to be sensitive to the southern position on some of these matters. So, it is very important that they begin to understand and to see the bigger picture that Southern organisations are important actors. You can't have sustainability, if you're just working on people and throwing money at them and thinking that you're going to create transformation".

Another interviewee added:

**"They [donors] should be receptive and begin to listen and also work with some respect and acknowledgement that if you are really serious about creating long lasting change, then it is important that you listen to what can bring about that change. The fact that you have the money does not mean you have audience. You need to understand the context in terms of what is going on and also ensure that you are more inclusive in coming up with whatever programme you want to implement".**

Also, interviewees suggested that donors should have critical self-retrospection including for example imposing or making conditionalities for INGOs to treat and work with local CSOs as equal partners as part of funding modalities. They also need to shift from the notion that local CSOs do not have capacity to manage or implement development projects, as well as strengthen relationship between donors and local CSOs. In fact, a participant in the webinar raised questions about the lack of clarity on donors' argument about the perceived lack of absorptive capacity of local CSOs by asking: "is it lack of capacity of local actors or misalignment of capacity tools to the capacity needs and skills that exist?". Aside from discussions on the lack of absorptive capacity, provision of support for local CSOs to develop stronger networks and coalitions to help one another in organisational and development



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interventions was also emphasised:

I think that donors have a major role to play here. They [donors] can make stricter conditionalities on the INGOs. For example, they have to bring local partners to the table with the donor, you signed tripartite agreements with the donor, it's not just the donor and the INGO that they are sub-contracting. But the local partners are actually a contract signatory.

Analysis of the data further points to need for donors to institutionalise mechanisms to ensure more flexible funding opportunities for CSOs. One way to do this according to the interviewees is to establish multi-donor or partners trust fund which CSOs could access funding:

**"Really interesting work is happening as a result of the multi-partner trust funds like the Bangladesh local fund for CSOs. There are a lot of localisation funds that are finding innovative ways of funding local CSOs [...] But I still believe that, of course, the system is still heavily weighted towards funding INGOs and there are major challenges in funding local CSOs especially at the grassroots level".**

Interviewees also stressed on the need to ensure





adequate transparency about funding requirements, creation of longer-term funding opportunities which has the potential to free up pressure on CSOs, and the gradual transfer of power from donors and INGOs to local CSOs. Examples were given of flexible and long-term fund opportunities for CSOs including the Hewlett Foundation that provides core funding to its partners in the Global South, as well as the Ford Foundation, who through its Building Institutions and Networks (BUILD) programme is providing funding to build the capacity of CSOs that they work with in the Global South. The practices and lessons from such flexible funding models ought to be studied and communicated for possible replication in different contexts.

Further analysis of the data suggests that enhancing the localisation agenda will require efforts to shift attention from normative discourse where funds generally flow from the Global North to the Global South. The need for more funding as a crucial part of promoting the localisation agenda require local CSOs to go beyond relying heavily on external funding sources to prioritising alternative resource mobilisation as part of their work. It emerged from the interviews that one way to do this is to create an enabling environment for local philanthropy that supports the work of CSOs as well as mobilise indigenous knowledge and support from within through attitudinal change aimed at supporting the work of CSOs. An interviewee for instance narrated: **“We are looking forward to having more donors from the Global South to support the work of CSOs”**. Therefore, the mechanisms to allow local

philanthropy to support the work of local CSOs remained crucial for many interviewees particularly in contexts where there is competition between local CSOs and INGOs for the limited funding opportunities as illustrated below:

**“I think having local funds for local actors, is a major step forward. You have to basically recognise that between INGOs and local CSOs, it is competition, it is a real marketplace where the power imbalances are such that the local actors can’t compete or a very few can. But I think that we really need to put a lot of efforts in having stronger local actors or funders as well as giving them greater access to long-term development funding”**.

Still on the part of donors, the research findings point to the need for donors to support efforts that contribute to strengthen the capacity of CSOs. Suggested areas of capacity strengthening revolved around improving the human resource capacity of staff, movement from “capacity filling to deliberate leadership capacity building” through regular training and mentoring programmes as well as strengthening CSOs’ capacity to create operational reserves and endowment funds as stated by an interviewee:

**“We have also been consistent and deliberate in looking at alternative resourcing for our work. That’s why some years back, we started growing an endowment, we have invested in real estate as well. So, you kind of have to work at changing yourself. So, we have refused that sort of orientation that ‘he who pays the Piper calls the tune’ and that’s why we are a bit of a different organisation”**.

#### **4.3.2 Best practices for governments in promoting the localisation agenda**

The important role of government in promoting the localisation agenda repeatedly surfaced during the interviews. Analysis of the data reveal that governments could revisit its legal and regulatory frameworks and make changes such as providing tax exemptions for private sector actors and other philanthropic organisations that support the work of CSOs. This is likely to create an incentive for these actors to expand their support for CSOs. It was also recommended for government to change priorities in the context of negotiations with donors and develop legal frameworks that would require INGOs operating within their jurisdictions to work closely





with local actors as part of the localisation agenda. There were also suggestions from interviewees that governments in the Global South should provide resources to support the work of CSOs in their countries.

It is important to note that some interviewees recounted their fear that if adequate measures are not put in place, the localisation agenda could become a powerful resource for government to shrink the civic space for local CSOs. In this regard, it was argued that donors need to provide the enabling environment for CSOs to reduce the influence of government in using the localisation agenda as a tool for restricting the work of CSOs.

#### 4.3.3 Best practices for local CSOs in promoting the localisation agenda

Interviewees also provided best practices for local CSOs to engage in as part of the efforts to promote the localisation agenda. First, it became evident through the interviews that a lot of CSOs in the Global South lack adequate understanding of what the localisation agenda really is and what it means for their work, as well as what donors actually want from them. Promoting the localisation agenda also requires CSOs to internalise the agenda. In doing so, interviewees explained that organisations such as WACSI ought to help in raising awareness among

grassroot organisations that have little knowledge of the localisation agenda:

**“We need to create awareness on the localisation agenda. A lot of organisations don’t really understand or know about the agenda. It is the sad reality. So those who are aware need to support with awareness”.**

Another interviewee concurred by stating that:

**“We need to ensure that the agenda itself is developed with civil society’s input and should be mainly civil society driven, not donor driven. We also need to take into account the voices of the broad spectrum of CSOs”.**

Another recommendation centred around creating mechanisms that could avoid duplication of efforts by CSOs. This could be achieved through for example, complementarity of efforts by way of mergers and effective communication. It is often the case that most CSOs in the Global South operate in silos particularly in advocating for the localisation agenda devoid of effective communication among the different actors. Rather than working in parallel to each other, a key informant spoke of the need for local CSOs to identify themselves through for example, the alignment of interest and form umbrella organisations or coalitions for the purposes of delivering development programmes and interventions. For instance, CSOs could come together to develop and implement joint programmes around the localisation agenda rather than work in competition with each.

Interviewees further stressed on the need to learn from successful models where local CSOs in the Global South have developed and implemented joint partnership initiatives in delivering their programmes. Lessons from such models could be shared with CSOs in other contexts for possible adaptation and replication to enhance effective collaboration and partnership especially with regards to resource mobilisation and programme delivery. While this might sound benign, the findings also suggest that the quest for organisational sustainability has increasingly led to intense competition among CSOs for funding. This in turn breeds competition which continues to affect effective collaborations among CSOs.

Finally, there were calls for strengthening the voice of local CSOs as part of efforts to enhance the localisation agenda. This finding revolves around the need for CSOs in the Global South to become more



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articulate, and honest about their added value in their partnership with donors on the one hand, and donors being receptive and listening to the voices of their partners on the other:

**“I think Southern-based organisations need to become more articulate, honest and authentic about who they are [...] When they bring their knowledge, they should not just keep quiet about things that they know are not working. So, for me, if you are pushing me to do something that I know it will not work, let me just stay without that money. So, we need to be able to take a hard position and I think we need to understand our value and the difference we are making and communicate that to donors”.**

Having presented and discussed the findings on the localisation agenda, the next section focuses on shift the power narratives focusing on its understandings and the role of African philanthropic organisations in promoting the shift the power agenda.



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## 5.0 Perspectives on Shift the Power Narratives in Development and Humanitarian Aid Sectors

In this section, we present the empirical evidence collected from interviewees on their awareness and understanding of the shift the power narrative. Before doing so, it is worth noting that there are multiple shift the power narratives such as shifting the power, power shifts, power shift and #ShiftThePower. As mentioned earlier in Section 1.0, shift the power narratives (e.g. Shifting the Power, Power Shifts and Power Shift) originated largely from donors and INGOs in the Global North and these narratives have been dominant in mainstream aid system. On the other hand, #ShiftThePower is a campaign or movement that emerged from CSOs in the Global South aimed at tipping the balance of power by promoting a fairer and more equitable people-centred development.

The analysis of the interview data is therefore structured around the understanding of the shift the power, the potential roles and contributions of African philanthropic organisations and CSOs in promoting the shift the power agenda, the relationship between domestic resource mobilisation and shift the power agenda, potential barriers and constraints inhibiting efforts to promote the shift the power agenda as well as strategies for addressing the identified potential barriers. The specific themes are supported with direct quotes from the interviewees we questioned.

### 5.1 Awareness and Understanding of the Shift the Power Narrative

This study found mixed results regarding the awareness and understanding of the conversations around, commitments towards and demand for shift the power among interviewees. In particular, a section of interviewees working for CSOs, demonstrated a greater awareness of shift the power. However, their understanding mainly reflected the conversations around the dominant paradigm (e.g. Shifting the Power, Power Shifts and Power Shift) in the aid system). For instance, in almost all the interviews with CSOs representative, they constantly mentioned that they were aware of the increasing emphasis of shift the power especially in development and humanitarian aid discourses in recent years. Interviewees attributed their increasing level of awareness of shift the power to global discourses such as decolonisation of humanitarian action and racial injustice. Speaking about the underlying factors accounting for the shift the power in the humanitarian aid sector, an interviewee noted that:

I think shift the power is receiving attention because there is an outcry at different levels. I mean, in the West, we are having uprisings or movements like the Black Lives Matter and there is a lot of discussion on racial injustice. There is a whole movement around decolonisation of development and this is affecting the shift the power discourse at different levels. So, it is affecting the discourse among governments in the West who are giving the aid [...]. It is also affecting





the discourse among INGOs who are themselves looking at their own roles within the development system and looking at how they can decolonise themselves and their work.

The interview data also suggests that some interviewees were also aware of the #ShiftThePower narrative largely championed by Southern-based organisations rather than the one that originates from the mainstream aid system. Speaking about the meaning of #ShiftThePower, an interviewee explained that:

**“There is also an awareness in the Global South on shift the power agenda. It is not that it hasn’t existed, but I think it is more acute now because many Global South organisations are asking themselves, how do we become more sustainable in the long-term rather than being dependent and in an inferior position of power within the development aid architecture”.**

The above statement suggests power imbalances within the aid system as one of the underlying factors driving the shift the power agenda among organisations in the Global South. For this reason, shift the power was understood as changing existing power dynamics in the development and humanitarian aid sectors.

### 5.1.1 Shift the Power as changing power dynamics

The consensus from the interviews was that the increasing levels of awareness on shift the power is caused in part by existing power asymmetries between organisations based in the Global North and those in the Global South especially with regards to agenda setting and decision making in their relationship. Informed by this, many interviewees expressed the view that shift the power is about efforts aimed at changing power dynamics by giving organisations in the Global South a voice and full participation in agenda setting and decision-making processes because of the ‘epistemic injustices’ in the aid sector. For instance, an interviewee working for a local CSO shared his perspective by noting that:

**“Shift the power is about the localisation of decision-making processes [...] We should fight against injustices in the aid system because our voices must be heard”.**

Another interviewee added:

**“When we talk about shifting the power, we are looking at a number of things. First of all, we are**



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**looking at the whole architecture of aid being inclusive of voices of different participants [...] We are also looking at a kind of system that allows the different actors to be contributing factors in decision making on development priorities and the arrangements for executing those priorities”.**

The above statements highlight that perceived understanding of shift the power revolves around changing the narrative on decision making and agenda setting where organisations based in the Global North often call the shots in decision-making mainly because of the resource dependence of their Southern counterparts. In fact, existing studies have documented how top-down decision-making processes are set by donors in the Global North with little or no involvement of organisations in the Global South. This in turn affects or undermines the ownership of projects, autonomy and local participation of CSOs in the Global South (see for example, Elbers et al., 2018; Elbers and Schulpen, 2013).

Notwithstanding, interviewees argued that, in recent years, some donors and organisations in the Global North are beginning to recognise the importance of shifting power dynamics to their Southern partners by involving them in decision making processes. In particular, mention was made of donors such as the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs whose funding





requirements demand that INGOs partner with local organisations in the Global South through consortia in applying for their funding. Other initiatives mentioned by interviewees include the Shifting the Power project by the START Network which comprises of organisations such as ActionAid, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), Christian Aid, Concern, Oxfam International and Tear Fund which seeks to localise humanitarian responses to crisis. In addition, INGOs like Oxfam International in recent years have also been having conversations around power shifts and also requesting for the participation of individuals from the Global South to serve on their governing board as explained by an interviewee below:

**“[...] You have INGOs that before did not have anybody or partners from the Global South on their boards but they are now looking at getting partners from the Global South and Oxfam has been leading on that. Oxfam International’s current board has several people from the Global South, I think even more than a half of the people on the board from the Global South”.**

#### **5.1.2 Shift the power as promoting local participation and ownership**

Aside from the involvement of Southern-based organisations in decision-making processes, the consensus among interviewees was that #ShiftThePower is about efforts aimed at promoting the ownership and local participation of intended beneficiaries or community members in the development process. One interviewee shared how she understood #ShiftThePower by arguing that it was about:

**“Making the local people feel ownership of what they are doing. And also making sure that it should go to target poverty and unemployment locally. We need shift the power because over the years, we have seen that there is business as usual. Humanitarian aid is not helping us move forward and there is a need for a kind of modification in the whole process so that humanitarian aid can be able to make sense, because as of now it is nonsense”.**

#### **5.1.3 Shift the power as trust building with community members**

Interviewees further emphasised that #ShiftThePower is largely about the need for building trust with community members which in turn leads to increased

community participation in the activities of CSOs and government agencies. This helps them to become sustainable organisations because as explained by an interviewee, #ShiftThePower “has a lot to do with creating and enabling trust [...]. So, for us, it is about centring trust with community members in everything we do”. Thus, #ShiftThePower is about the direct involvement of community members in the operations and activities of CSOs and governments which helps in giving more power to the grassroots to decide on their development needs and priorities. This according to many interviewees requires time and deliberate efforts by development stakeholders (e.g., government, CSOs etc.). Interviewees explained that building trust with the grassroots helps in enhancing their organisational legitimacy and credibility. Therefore, “closeness to the grassroots” as stated by an interviewee helps in creating a perceived sense of acceptance and legitimacy. The following statement sums up the connection between trust building, organisational legitimacy and credibility arising from #ShiftThePower:

**“#ShiftThePower is a question of trust building which also increases our organisational credibility and legitimacy in the areas in which we are working and also increasing a sense of loyalty within the groups or communities you are working in”.**

#### **5.1.4 Shift the power as equal partnership between Southern-based organisations**

What emerged strongly from the interviews was that while #ShiftThePower is often framed around shifting power dynamics between the Global North and South, it also involves efforts by Southern-based CSOs not to reinforce the existing power dynamics with their local counterparts such as community-based organisations (CBOs). Thus, according to interviewees, #ShiftThePower is not only limited to donors’ and INGOs’ relationships with their local CSOs but also emphasise on mutual relationships among Southern-based organisations as stated in the following quotes:

**“#ShiftThePower is not only for Global North organisations but even in the Global South, there are power imbalances in the way organisations at the national and local levels engage. So, we need to be looking at that so that we are not just pointing fingers [...] and replicating those existing power imbalances”.**

Interviewees further explained that #ShiftThePower



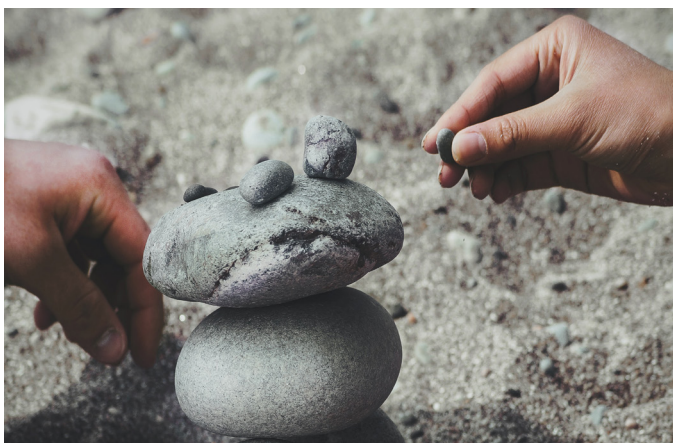


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was also about efforts to bridge the unequal power relationship between governments and CSOs in the Global South. According to a section of interviews, many governments in the Global South wield enormous power especially mainly because of their ability to regulate the activities of CSOs. For this reason, many tend to use their regulatory powers against CSOs they perceive as 'threats' especially by closing the civic space or environment within which these CSOs operate. Informed by this, the understanding of #ShiftThePower was about efforts aimed at changing the unequal power dynamics between governments and CSOs in the Global South.

This study further found that although many interviewees understood and were familiar with shift the power, there were also a section of interviewees who clearly demonstrated a lack of understanding of the term. For instance, some interviewees often used the term shift the power interchangeably with the localisation agenda. Thus, there was a conflation of shift the power and the localisation agenda as demonstrated by an interviewee who espoused:

**"I believe that shift the power is pretty similar to the localisation agenda in that it wants to give the power as it were, from the donors and the governments to the locals. And for me, that's really with localisation agenda, so that's my understanding of it".**

A similar perspective was shared by an interviewee who stated that:

**"I haven't heard about the shift the power, though. I know there has been agitations. And there have been this contestation between local NGOs and INGOs with both accusing each other, one accusing the other for stealing their work and the other accusing the other of not having**

**capacity. So, is that the shift the power you are talking about?"**

A few interviewees also explained that they had never heard of the shift the power mainly because they had not paid attention to it and therefore it was new to them. For instance, an interviewee stated that "I don't know anything about shift the power. I may have come across it, but probably just never paid attention to it". This clearly demonstrates that while terms such as shift the power, shifting power, power shifts and #ShiftThePower are increasingly receiving much attention in recent years, the narrative is not well understood by all actors which in turn calls for advocacy efforts aimed at increasing and promoting the visibility and acceptability of the various shift the power narratives.

## **5.2 Southern-based organisations' roles in promoting the shift the power agenda**

Many interviewees mentioned that they have been playing various roles in promoting shift the power. Analysis of the interview data suggests that the roles of Southern-based organisations could be categorised as: i) advocacy through involvement in discussion of shift the power at the global and national levels; and ii) implementation of shift the power narrative in projects and programmes. These are discussed below:

### **5.2.1 Southern-based CSOs and their involvement in advocacy and discussions on shift the power agenda**

The interview data suggests that CSOs including philanthropic organisations in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone have played active roles by engaging in active advocacy and discussions about #ShiftThePower. In particular, it was mentioned that organisations such as WACSI has been at the fore front of discussions on #ShiftThePower movement or campaign within the West African region. For instance, speaking about their involvement in discussions on #ShiftThePower at the global and national levels, an interviewee stated that **"I was actually part of the forum that came up with the #ShiftThePower"**. The involvement Southern-based organisations in promoting the discussions on shift the power has also been in the area of their participations in global networks and projects that seek to change the power dynamics between the Global North and South as illustrated in the following quotes:

**“We are having major programmes like the Reimagining INGO (i.e., RINGO) project of which WACSI is part of [...] We want to work together with INGOs and partners in the Global South to take a critical look at transforming the way we do development in order to shift the power [...] Even in the technology space, we have organisations like TechSoup and WACSI that is part of the network pushing the agenda to get the big technology companies to invest more in supporting smaller organisations in the Global South which all contribute to shift the power”.**

### **5.2.2 Implementation of shift the power narrative in project implementation**

Analysis of interview data suggests that Southern-based organisations have played a role in enhancing the shift the power by incorporating it into their programmes and projects. For instance, some representatives of philanthropic organisations interviewed argued that they have incorporated elements of shift the power such as the provision of flexibility in funding arrangements and co-creation of project ideas with community members into their programmes. This they argued has helped in enhancing the operationalisation of the #ShiftThePower at the local level. For instance, according to some interviewees, organisations such as the STAR-Ghana Foundation and Newmont Ahafo Development Foundation have incorporated what they called “participatory grant making processes” into their funding arrangements where their grantees discuss with the organisations their needs and priorities which feeds into the grant making arrangements. A similar sentiment was shared by representative of the Kenyan Community Development Fund who argued that the organisation gives it grantees some level of flexibility with regards to their funding arrangements and reporting requirements. More importantly, it was reported that such organisations continue to develop relationships with their grantees and partners beyond their project cycles in their bid to learn and incorporate innovative mechanisms in grant making. This the interviewees believed has helped in shifting the power from the organisation to the partners or grantees. An interviewee described how they have promoted or enhanced #ShiftThePower through grant making by stating that:

**“We have always adopted a participatory grant-making process as a foundation [...] We have been working with our partners in a**

**modality I would call co-creation where we sit down to discuss what their needs are and what should be their priorities. And so, you wouldn’t see [us] as the usual grant maker where the relationship ends with grants. We’ve been with our partners in the field and have used lessons from the field to revise our grant-making cycle. So, it has been one of our responses of making grants more participatory, community tailored and responsive in nature which contributes to shifting the power”.**

A similar sentiment was shared by an interviewee who argued that:

**“It is the communities themselves that negotiated with the company for almost two years to come up with an agreement that benefits them. So even the company coming up to say, let’s set up an organisation to work with the community members to think about their own development is a shift the power. So, for us as a foundation, before we carry out any activity, it is the communities that have to initiate [...] So we have shifted the power even before we started to operate as a foundation”.**

### **5.3 Role African philanthropic organisations in promoting the shift the power agenda**

This section presents and discusses the findings on African philanthropic organisations’ (e.g., intermediary and local grant-making organisations/foundations, community philanthropy builders, trusts etc.) role in promoting the shift the power narrative. The findings are structured around their advocacy roles in mobilising domestic resources and the provision of financial and non-financial resources to local CSOs to engage in programmes and projects related to shift the power.

#### **5.3.1 Advocacy for the mobilisation of domestic resources**

Analysis of interview data suggests that African philanthropic organisations have been playing instrumental roles in enhancing shift the power by promoting the mobilisation of domestic resources. Across all the interviews, a common theme that emerged was that philanthropic organisations such as the African Womens Development Fund, STAR-Ghana Foundation, Initiative Pananetugri pour le Bien-être de la Femme (IPBF) and Newmont Ahafo Development Foundation have been actively advocating for the mobilisation of domestic





resources (i.e., financial and non-financial) by their partners. For example, a representative of STAR-Ghana Foundation emphasised that the organisation has been piloting initiatives that support partners to build infrastructure for local philanthropy. The representative went further to explain that the foundation was supporting a partner:

**“To set up community fund that supports women who are alleged of witchcraft [...] So, our contribution in enhancing the shift the power agenda is supporting the development and testing of approaches of local fundraising or philanthropy in response to the needs of the communities”.**

### 5.3.2 Supporting local CSOs through the provision of resources

Another important role of African philanthropic organisations identified by interviewees relates to the provision of financial and non-financial resources in supporting the work of local CSOs. For instance, with regards to financial resources, a number of interviewees explained that given the epistemic injustice and inequality in the funding landscape of the current aid system, African philanthropic organisations should play a critical role of providing funding to especially local CSOs that do not have the

perceived capacity to attract funding from external donors. Interviewees expressed the view that African philanthropic organisations could enhance #ShiftThePower by providing flexible and long-term funding arrangements including the provision of core funding and also taking into account how the context within which local CSOs affects their operations.

This study further found that while the provision of flexible funding arrangements by African philanthropic organisations has the potential to enhance the promotion of #ShiftThePower, a concern raised by interviewees relates to the unwillingness of African philanthropic organisations to fund activities of local CSOs that seek to challenge existing power structures. Interviewees explained that many African philanthropists and their foundations tend to focus more on supporting service delivery rather than advocacy and social justice issues due in part to the lack of philanthropic infrastructure:

**“Having more philanthropic donors from the Global South especially in Africa is critical. However, for that to happen, we need to build the right infrastructure to support it, which is something that we don’t have. We talk about the fact that African philanthropy exist, but how do we do channel their support towards social justice, social protection, social accountability etc. is a challenge. This is because the culture of supporting these issues has to be nurtured and there’s also the lack of infrastructure”.**

Aside from the lack of philanthropic infrastructure, interviewees emphasised that many high-net worth individuals (HNWIs) prefer undertaking their philanthropic activities directly through their own foundations rather than CSOs is due in part to issues such as the lack of perceived accountability and transparency on the part of CSOs. This in turn has created a sense of trust deficit for CSOs, hence some HNWIs are reluctant to support their activities. The perceived lack of accountability and transparency by CSOs was a recurrent underlying factor for CSOs’ inability to mobilise resources from HNWIs:

**“I think the issue of internal controls and checks for CSOs in the Global South is a challenge. So, some CSOs have given the sector a very bad name, in terms of corruption and all of that. So, yes, the lack of transparency and accountability on the part of CSOs is a major factor”.**

Another factor that accounts for the perceived



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lack of engagements between HNWI and CSOs especially NGOs is that HNWI prefer giving through their own foundations in order to help in promoting their personal or self-brands, hence they tend to have little collaborations with NGOs. For this reason, African HNWI often give to their own foundations rather than through NGOs:

**“The foundations set up by high-net worth Individuals often want to push their own agenda and branding. So, partnering or collaborating with NGOs is not part of their DNA [...] I’ve made several efforts to collaborate with foundations within Nigeria but it has not been easy rather it’s easier collaborating with foundations outside”.**

#### **5.4 Capacity of African philanthropic organisations in promoting shift the power agenda**

The capacity of African philanthropic organisations to promote the shift the power was a key theme that emerged from the interview data. Indeed, across all interviewees, the agreement was that although African philanthropic organisations had the human and technical capacity in promoting shift the power through their mobilisation of domestic resources, however, for this potential to be fully achieved, it required the creation of an enabling environment that seeks to make deliberate efforts for local philanthropy to thrive. The need for creating an enabling environment was therefore a recurrent concern expressed by interviewees as noted below:

**“In the context of local philanthropy, there has to be an enabling environment [...] I am talking about the existence and functionality of legal frameworks that support philanthropic organisations. We are also looking at issues around tax rebates for companies that do philanthropic work and also support systems that allow people to donate their money and time in support of social change”.**

Another interviewee noted that:

**“In Nigeria, there aren’t any specific laws that are tailored towards giving or philanthropy per se. Philanthropy happens every day [...]. But there is need to gather data correctly on philanthropy and that comes to enabling laws that allow individuals to give freely. Therefore, creating the enabling environment is crucial”.**

The above statements clearly highlight that for



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African philanthropic organisations to effectively promote shift the power and consequently change structural imbalances in the aid system, it requires the creation of an enabling environment for the effective functioning of philanthropic organisations. As the empirical findings from this study highlight, discussions of enabling environment revolve around regulatory mechanisms that create incentives for local giving or philanthropy such as tax rebates and exemptions and the building of public trusts in philanthropic organisations through regulatory policies that enhance accountability and transparency. For instance, an interviewee mentioned that enabling environment on philanthropy includes **“laws and policies that allow giving to be fully done and accounted for”**. This assertion by the interviewee was on the basis that some philanthropic organisations are not transparent in their financial management.

Aside from regulatory frameworks on transparency and accountability, policies that seek to promote the documentation of data on philanthropic organisations including their contributions to national development should form an important aspect of discussions on enabling environment. Moreover, interviewees explained that the creation



of enabling environment also includes policies that create an open civic space where African philanthropic organisations can go about their work without any fear or intimidation. Many interviewees remarked that governments therefore had a crucial role to play in promoting shift the power agenda by “creating an enabling environment which ensures that that civic space of philanthropic organisations is not threatened and whatever laws we have nationally and sub-nationally are enabling”.

## 5.5 Constraints inhibiting the promotion of the shift of power by African philanthropic organisations

It is evident from this study that African philanthropic organisations face a number of constraints or barriers which limit them to fully exploit their potential of contributing positively towards promoting shift the power narratives. These constraints are categorised into: i) limited engagement between African philanthropic organisations and CSOs; ii) lack of resources for African philanthropic organisations to support a large number of local organisations promoting shift the power narratives; iii) the lack of an enabling environment that fosters or promotes local giving culture.

### 5.5.1 Weak collaboration between African philanthropic organisations and local CSOs

The interview data suggests that the nature of collaboration between African philanthropic organisations and CSOs is very weak and to some extent non-existent. This perceived weak collaboration was attributed to a number of factors prominent among them include the lack of convergence of interests and priority between African philanthropic organisations and local CSOs. Indeed, some interviewees expressed the view that many African philanthropic organisations tend to focus on service delivery and humanitarian issues rather than investing in thematic areas such as good governance and environmental rights and advocacy because they tend to consider those areas as technical, hence outside their purview. This according to interviewees has the potential to negatively affects efforts aimed at promoting the shift the power narratives. The perceived lack of alignment of interests and priority areas led one interview to state that:

**“We [CSOs and African philanthropic organisations] definitely live-in separate worlds [...] They are basically humanitarian in nature and not necessarily involved in the work we do**

**such as promoting good governance because some of that work is technical”.**

The above statement clearly demonstrates the disconnect and the lack of alignment in the priority areas of African philanthropic organisations and NGOs. In fact, many African philanthropists including HNWI's often do not favour NGOs as intermediaries for undertaking their philanthropic activities. This is also not to suggest that philanthropic organisations do not support the work of CSOs (e.g., NGOs) given that African philanthropic organisations such as African Women's Development Fund, Kiisi Trust Foundation and STAR-Ghana Foundation have been providing financial and non-financial resources to CSOs in Nigeria, Ghana and other African countries. Informed by the weak nature of collaboration between African philanthropic organisations and CSOs, a section of interviewees argued that for African philanthropic organisations to meaningfully play their role in promoting shift the power narratives, they need to invest resources in supporting “conceptual issues that affects the very fundamentals of our development” by working in close collaboration with especially indigenous civil society. Among the issues they could focus on in supporting CSOs to undertake active advocacy includes respect for African values and decolonisation efforts that seek to alter the narratives around African development. According to an interviewee, failure of African philanthropic organisations to engage with systemic and structural issues that affect African development would limit their potential roles in promoting the shift the power:

**“If you look at African philanthropic organisations, many of them need to change or, add to the work that they are doing because just focusing on social sector issues like health and education which is good, and which they shouldn't stop but if you don't address these fundamentals [i.e., respect for African values, decolonisation efforts], we will continue to depend on external donor funding”.**

The above statement also raises questions about the perceived unwillingness or lack of interests by African philanthropic organisations to challenge existing power structures that perpetuates injustice in many societies. According to interviewees, African philanthropic organisations especially those established by corporate organisations and high-net worth individuals (HNWI's) are reluctant to support especially advocacy work of CSOs that seeks to confront power holders or government





officials mainly because of **“fear of being politically tagged”** which in turn has negative implications or repercussions for their businesses or sources of wealth. In fact, as mentioned earlier, many HNWI and their foundations shy away from advocacy or contentious issues but rather focus on social service delivery and basic needs. This they argued does not help in holding duty bearers to account. Moreover, interviewees explained that many African philanthropic organisations including private foundations are also disconnected from the international aid system. This is because they tend to focus their giving within their own countries although a few engage in cross-border giving. Thus, giving by African philanthropists is local in nature. Similar observations have been made in the emerging literature on African philanthropy (see for example, Hayi-Charters et al., 2021; Fowler, 2021).

### 5.5.2 Limited resources and inability to work with CSOs and communities on sustainable basis

Analysis of the interview data suggests that limited financial resources by African philanthropic organisations serves as a hinderance in their attempt to promote shift the power. This is particularly so given that their funding is only able to reach a selected number of organisations. According to interviewees, even for those organisations that receive the funds, the funding arrangements and modalities mirror that of donors (i.e., bilateral and multilateral donor agencies and INGOs) in the aid system because they are often tie to specific projects and outcomes. Thus, majority of funding by African philanthropic organisations are project-based and short-term in nature which creates a challenge in sustaining the projects when funding ends. In lamenting about

their funding, an interviewee mentioned that:

**“I think that one of the ways which we can promote the shift the power agenda is by ensuring that African philanthropic organisations work a lot more with the people in a more sustainable manner, not in a haphazard manner, where they work with them on a project-by-project basis. We need to think more around programmes with long-term impacts”.**

A section of interviewees further argued that funding from many African philanthropic organisations to CSOs was tied to the interests of their founders and therefore do not create room for experimentation and innovations. This in turn affects the ability of CSOs to adopt innovative ways of working with communities.

### 5.5.3 The challenge of building the agency of communities

Another challenge that affects the potential of African philanthropic organisations to promote the shift the power narrative relates to their inability to involve community members in their agenda setting and decision-making processes. Some interviewees expressed the view that many African philanthropic organisations are more accountable to their founders rather than the communities they purport to serve which also affects their closeness to the grassroots and ability to give voices to the poor. In fact, for many African philanthropic organisations, some interviewees reported that they face a challenge of not being rooted or have connections with the in the grassroots:





**“I do not think that many local philanthropic organisations have adequately found their roots in their constituencies. I mean, connection with the people, you are speaking for. But do they feel connected with you? No! It is a problem. I think that is a major challenge”.**

Directly related to the above, some interviewees expressed the view that many African philanthropic organisations because of their emphasis on service delivery and humanitarian issues (e.g., meeting basic needs) have failed to empower and build the agency of their intended beneficiaries or constituents. This is largely because advocacy and capacity strengthening initiatives for communities are often not part of the interventions provided by African philanthropic organisations. Consequently, this affects their ability to build the agency of their constituents which also has negative implications on efforts to promote shift the power:

**“Many philanthropic organisations are crafting solutions and implementing fantastic projects, but they are not doing that in a way that strengthens the agency of the people [...] So, I think they need to connect more with the grassroots, context and the people. I think that by doing so, we will be able to strengthen the base and power of the people, inadvertently promote the shift the power agenda”.**

## **5.6 Domestic resource mobilisation and the shift the power agenda**

### **5.6.1 Domestic resources create flexibility and autonomy for Southern-based organisations**

Analysis of interview data suggests that domestic resource mobilisation has a huge potential in promoting shift the power by changing the power dynamics between the Global and North. In particular, the majority of interviewees observed that the mobilisation of domestic or local resources was very important in efforts to shift the power to local organisations because it created an opportunity for diversifying their funding streams. This helps them in addressing challenges associated with being reliant on donor funding such as revenue volatility and its associated financial vulnerability. Speaking about the importance of domestic resource mobilisation and its relationship with shift the power, an interviewee shared her experience by arguing that the mobilisation of local resources creates flexibility for Southern-based CSOs in their relationship with donors:

**“If Southern-based organisations mobilise domestic resources, I think it will show some diversity on their funding, meaning there are things you can do with some of the resources you have [...] And it gives them the flexibility to do some of the things they would like to do. So, I think creating alternative resources gives you more leverage in achieving your objectives as an organisation”.**

A key argument raised by many interviewees was that the flexibility created through the mobilisation of domestic resources allows Southern-based organisations to become autonomous and independent in their relationship with donors, hence are able to use their resources to implement projects and programmes that donors are unwilling to fund. For instance, an interviewee explained that the mobilisation of domestic resources “increases the non-programmatic funding aspects for organisations”, hence are able to cater for programmes and overheads which donors are unwilling to fund. This in turn helps them achieve their organisational goals and mission:

**“I believe that if CSOs in the Global South are able to mobilise resources locally, it will help definitely shift the power. So, part of the reason why many local CSOs feel so constrained is because they have to dance to the tune of their donors. But if they are able to have their own resources, they are better able to focus on their own mission. A lot of CSOs have to chase funding just to survive and many at times leave their initial vision and mission simply because funding is only available for some other projects which are not part of their goal”.**

### **5.6.2 Domestic resource mobilisation and power dynamics between the Global North and South**

This study found that the mobilisation of domestic resources has a huge potential to change the asymmetrical relationships or power imbalance between organisations in the Global North and South. Interviewees explained that over the years, the relationship has been unequal mainly because of the resource dependency of Southern-based organisations on their Northern counterparts. However, the mobilisation of local resources by Southern-based organisations creates opportunities for an equal or mutually interdependent relationship because of its ability to reduce their resource dependence. According to interviewees, mobilising domestic resources will help in changing the



narrative that **“he who pays the piper dictates the tune”** as stated by an interviewee. In explaining how the mobilisation of domestic resources will help shift the power especially in terms of agenda setting and decision-making processes, some interviewees expressed the view that it will create opportunities for the voices of Southern-based organisations to be heard by their donors because they also bring their own resources to the negotiating table which in the long-run has the potential of changing the existing unequal relationships:

**“Local resource mobilisation by Southern-based organisations would help change the power dynamics because we would have equal partnerships. When you have a partner in the Global North coming to work with a partner in the Global South partner who is also coming not only with their knowledge, and their capacity, but also money, there will definitely be more of an interdependent relationship than we currently have”.**

Another interviewee concurred with the argument that domestic resource mobilisation would create opportunities for an equal relationship between donors and their partners by stating that:

**“I think if we [local CSOs] are able to mobilise local resources, it puts us at a level where we can engage more equally with donors. So, it has the tendency to balance the power at the table and also in the aid architecture where Southern-based organisations will move from being recipients to becoming co-investors in their relationship with donors”.**

Despite the widespread perception that the mobilisation of domestic or local resources would result in changing the power imbalances between the Global North and South, a few interviewees expressed doubts about the potential of domestic resources in changing the existing power imbalances. According to these interviewees, given the structure of the current aid system and the amount of financial resources provided by donors, the contribution of domestic resources is relatively smaller and this affects its potential to result in any significant shifts in the relationship between donors and their partners in the Global South. For instance, when asked about their perceptions on whether domestic resource mobilisation would help in promoting shift the power, the following quote sums up the state of affairs:

**“For me, domestic resource mobilisation is not enough to actually create the sort of power**

**balance we are desiring. Local resources can never match what donors offer to us. That’s the truth but it may contribute to sort of tilting the balance just a bit but will not change the status quo. This is because many factors contribute to the power imbalance [...], our governments are heavily reliant on external funding. So, it is not that simple because there are so many other factors that need to be interrogated”.**

### **5.6.3 Domestic resource mobilisation: A mechanism for promoting downward accountability and increasing legitimacy?**

A recurrent theme across interviews was that the mobilisation of domestic has the potential to promote downward accountability as Southern-based organisations will become more responsive to the needs of their constituents. Many interviewees explained that the mobilisation of domestic resources helps in enhancing the development of a stronger relationship between CSOs and their intended beneficiaries. For this reason, CSOs prioritise and become very responsive to the needs of their intended beneficiaries who they have mobilised resources from. This makes them more accountable to the intended beneficiaries because they act as ‘donors’ and are therefore able to demand accountability from them. In explaining how the mobilisation of domestic resources leads to downward accountability and legitimacy, an interviewee stated:

**“Local giving is not just a question about money. It is a question about increasing organisational credibility and legitimacy in the areas in which you are working and increasing a sense of loyalty within the groups you are working in. If someone is paying you to do something, that means they really value you even if it is a small contribution”.**

Another interviewee iterated by saying:

**“If organisations have a funding base locally, that means they also have power locally. So, it gives them much more credibility with the communities that they are working in”.**

It is clear from the above statements that there is a positive relationship between the mobilisation of domestic resources and credibility and pragmatic legitimacy of organisations. For instance, interviewees mentioned that given the challenges and difficulty associated with the mobilisation of domestic resources such as community apathy and lack of trust, if an organisation is able to do, it is an indication that the community values their





contributions and are able to command “local power”. In fact, a section of interviewees emphasised that an organisation’s legitimacy and worthiness with the grassroots determines the extent to which it is able to mobilise domestic resources. They further maintained that having legitimacy also helps in building trust with intended beneficiaries which is a crucial mechanism for organisational sustainability.

More importantly, it emerged from the interview data that the mobilisation of domestic resources such as volunteer support promotes community ownership through civic engagement and participation in the activities of CSOs. This helps in giving power to the grassroots where community members are able to participate in decision making processes of especially local CSOs including CBOs. The mobilisation of domestic resources therefore creates opportunities for community members to become co-investors rather than beneficiaries of CSOs’ interventions as stated by an interviewee:

**“So, it [domestic resources] has a tendency to balance the power in the aid architecture where citizens move from being recipients of CSOs’ interventions become co-investors in any initiative”.**

Another interviewee added:

**“Mobilising local resources shifts the power from projects being sponsored by donors to one that allows citizens and community members to become co-investors in any development**

**process”.**

The effect of mobilising domestic resources is that it creates a sense of ownership that helps in promoting downward accountability often built on trust and transparency. It also helps in giving power over decision-making and resource allocations to the community members who act as supporters and volunteers.

### **5.7 Limitations or barriers to domestic resource mobilisation**

Notwithstanding the positive role of domestic resource mobilisation in promoting or enhancing shift the power, this study found a number of limitations or barriers that affect these potentials.

First, is the lack of leadership and capacity of local CSOs to mobilise domestic resources. Interviewees expressed the view that many local CSOs have not made the required investments in strengthening their own organisational capacity to mobilise domestic resources. For instance, when asked about the ways of enhancing domestic resource mobilisation efforts, an interviewee replied: “we also have to also grow our own capacities to mobilise local resources”. According to this interviewee and many others, majority of CSOs have failed to adequately make conscious efforts to invest in their capacity for mobilising domestic resources.

Second, the political, economic and social environment within which CSOs operate have a huge influence on their ability to mobilise domestic resources. For example, an interviewee explained the geographical location of an organisation determines the extent to which it is able to mobilise domestic resources by saying that:

**“I think that some CSOs will be challenged to mobilise local resources, because of location and where they find themselves because in an environment with a smaller number of organisations, competition for domestic resources will be much lower. I believe that a CSO will be able to mobilise support more than some CSOs within some communities because of the number of organisations operating there”.**

Another argued:

**“We should not in my view, disassociate the environment in which these organisations operate from the political and economic context in which they are [...] Creating a type of revenue**







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**generating service is also extremely complex, because you are working in these failed markets. And you are working for populations who don't have money. Your client base for any type of revenue generating service is going to be very difficult to put in place".**

This suggests that the external environment has a significant influence on the ability of CSOs to mobilise domestic resources. Directly related to this is the effects of the political and regulatory environment on domestic resource mobilisation. Across the case study countries, the consensus among interviewees was that existing regulatory and policy frameworks do not support the mobilisation of domestic resources or the growth of local philanthropy. This is largely because of the absence of an enabling environment. An interviewee lamented about how regulatory and legal frameworks influence domestic resource mobilisation by explaining that:

**"I think there clearly needs to be a regulatory environment that enables local actors to run their own businesses because a lot of organisations do not know that they are allowed to mobilise local resources by generating revenues from their projects. So, it is important to have a clear legal framework that the organisations know and understand it".**

Another interviewee mentioned that:

**"The external environment is excessively complex. I think even if organisations had the skills or the experience to grow local fundraising, it is still very complex because in countries like Nigeria, there is not much regulatory frameworks to govern their activities. So, there are no policies or procedures to guide organisations to mobilise**

**domestic resources".**

Notwithstanding these perceived barriers and sentiments about how regulatory and legal frameworks influence domestic resources, a section of interviewees argued that many CSOs are using the absence of an enabling environment as a façade or **"blaming the system"** for their failure to mobilise domestic resources:

**"Personally, I think the legal environment could be better, but it doesn't stop anybody who wants to mobilise domestic resources, because otherwise you would wonder why we have survived in this country [...]. And it [legal framework] doesn't stop you from raising resources locally and also from profiling the work you do. You can convince the people; you can show them what you are doing and why they should support you".**

The empirical evidence presented above is a clear indication that the requirements for mobilising domestic extend beyond the legal and regulatory to include issues such as CSOs visibility and reputation which also determines their legitimacy. For this reason, an agreement among interviewees was that CSOs need to "invest in communicating about their work" to stakeholders including community members. They maintained that strategic communication about their activities would help CSOs to mobilise domestic resources from their constituents.

The section that follows presents and discusses the findings on the added value of pooled funding mechanism in promoting the localisation agenda and shift the power.

17 See for example, <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/7266.pdf>





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## 6.0 Pooled or Intermediary Funding Mechanism, Localisation Agenda and Shift the Power

This section focuses on interviewees' perspectives on pooled or intermediary funding and its relationship with the localisation agenda and shift the power. The findings are structured around the nature of funding landscape and experiences with pooled or intermediary funding mechanisms, perceptions about the flexibility and ownership potentials of pooled funding mechanisms and its related challenges. These findings are presented and discussed below.

### 6.1 Nature of funding landscape and experiences with pooled or intermediary funding mechanism for CSOs

Analysis of interview data suggests that the funding landscape is characterised by high donor dependency across three countries (i.e., Burkina Faso, Ghana and Nigeria). In fact, many interviewees explained that donor funding constitutes the major source of funding for local CSOs albeit it has some perceived negative implications on their operations. For instance, in discussing the nature of the funding landscape in Nigeria, an interviewee stated that:

**“We’ve got to do more in terms of trying to find out how we can support each other with funding locally because there is such an over reliance on the Global North organisations and of course, that has its own disadvantages. Whoever feeds you control or manipulate you and your agenda**

**and that’s what is happening in Nigeria especially when you’re an organisation that is looking for money. You’ll take everything that they tell you even if you know it’s not going to end. At the end of the day, it puts your own reputation at stake”.**

Similarly, an interviewee in Ghana alluded to the above sentiment of over reliance on external donor funding and how it affects their operations by stating that:

**“In Ghana, CSOs are very dependent on external donors. In fact, some are over 90% dependent and others are even 100% dependent on donor funding [...] Because of the dependency on this money, there is a certain patronising relationship that exists between those that receive and those that give the money [...] Some organisations defer to whatever it is that the donors want and sometimes changing their programmes to fit what their donors want in order to get the funding they need to work and survive as an organisation”.**

Directly related to the above, interviewees strongly argued that donor funding is characterised by short-term funding arrangements where the emphasis is on project-based funding rather than providing funding for institutional strengthening. This negatively has implications on the human resource capacity of organisations as they are unable to hire and retain competent staff especially when donor project funding ends. The challenges associated with project-based funding and how it affects human resource capacity of CSOs was summed up by an





interviewee in the following quotes:

**“Non-profit [CSOs] staff in the Global North are well paid, they have benefits. But for us here [Global South], when you give them [donors and INGOs] overhead, you’re told that they are not able to support overhead. They are only interested in you doing the work but not your institutional strengthening [...] So, we the local organisations in the Global South are not given overheads which is not fair”.**

Notwithstanding the challenges associated with the lack of funding for overheads, interviewees were quick to mention that in countries like Ghana and Nigeria, donors such as Hewlett Foundation and Ford Foundation have provided flexible funding for institutional strengthening. For instance, the Ford Foundation through its BUILD programme provides core funding for its partners as stated by an interviewee:

**“Funding is still restrictive and quite limiting. It doesn’t cover most overheads. However, in truth, some organisations like the Ford Foundation and some others are coming up with or trying to come up with systems that are less restrictive, but the majority of funders are still quite restrictive with their funding”.**

Aside from external donor funding, interviewees also mentioned that domestic resource mobilisation is



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gaining much attention and prominence where they generate revenue from income generating activities, social enterprises, corporate and community philanthropy. However, as mentioned earlier, the amount of financial resources generated locally is relatively smaller compared to external donor funding.

With regards to experiences with pooled funding mechanisms, interview data shows a mixed results on the familiarity and experience of interviewees with pooled funding. It is worth clarifying that there are differences between pooled or intermediary funding and country-based pooled funds (CBPF). Pooled or intermediary funding emerged out of the need for aid effectiveness where donors pool or harmonise their funding together to reduce transaction cost. The aim is to promote local ownership, harmonisation and mutual accountability. On the other hand, CBPF is a humanitarian pooled funding instrument where donors pool their contributions into a single unearmarked funds in support of local humanitarian efforts. CBPF are managed by OCHA. The discussions in this study focuses on both pooled or intermediary funding and CBPF.

Analysis of the interview data suggests that a section of interviewees in countries like Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone demonstrated a deeper understanding of pooled funding mechanism while some also explained that they had no experience at all with such funding mechanisms. For interviewees who had experience with pooled funding mechanisms, they explained that this funding mechanism happened in the past as indicated by one interviewee who stated that:

**“For now, I don’t know of any pooled funding mechanism in [country A]. But I know that in the past, in the [District A] area, there was a kind of endowment fund that was put in place”.**

Another added:

**“There are many organisations or donors that come together and they put their funds together for critically endangered species around the Guinean hotspot”.**

In the case of Ghana, examples of past pooled or intermediary funding mechanism such as STAR-Ghana, Business Sector and Advocacy Challenge Fund (BUSAC), Kasa Initiative and Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme (G-RAP) were mentioned. For Nigeria, interviewees mentioned CBPF such as

<sup>18</sup> For details on CBPF, see <https://www.unocha.org/our-work/humanitarian-finance/country-based-pooled-funds-cbpf>

<sup>19</sup> See <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/12%20-%20Nigeria%20HF%202020%20Annual%20Report.pdf>



the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund for organisations working in the humanitarian sector. However, despite the existence of these pooled funding mechanisms, some interviewees mentioned that they had not applied for funding from any pooled funding mechanism or arrangement mainly because they were not aware of such opportunities.

## 6.2 Perception of flexibility, local ownership and challenges with pooled or intermediary funding

The study found that the potential of pooled or intermediary funding to promote flexibility and local ownership is dependent on the type of donors involved and the nature of their conditionalities or requirements. According to some interviewees, pooled or intermediary funding mechanisms do not help in promoting flexibility in funding arrangements mainly because of the need to meet the demands of different donors which makes the process of applying for their funding much complex. For instance, when asked about this perception on pooled or intermediary funding mechanism and flexibility, an interviewee lamented that:

I'm not seeing the flexibility because we spend more time meeting the different conditions put in place by the donors. They don't come with their money and allow you to be flexible. They come with their conditions that you have to follow but then the time you do the work is less. From our experience, they feel you're answerable only to them, so they can call you at any time and they can decide when they're giving you money. Their procedures too are not very clear and they forget to know that the local organisations are accountable to their local people.

Due to the perceived lack of flexibility associated with pooled or intermediary funding mechanisms, some interviewees argued that it could affect efforts to promote shift the power as the voices of many local organisations are not heard or incorporated into decision-making processes.

However, a section of interviewees also argued that pooled or intermediary funding mechanisms have the potential to promote flexibility because different actors come together to promote a worthy cause in society:

**“Pooled funding, I think is a really good funding model because it increases flexibility. It has a lot of strong potential as a mechanism to advance the localisation agenda and shift the power”.**

Despite the differences in opinions, interviewees



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asserted that the ability to pooled or intermediary funding mechanisms to promote the shift the power and localisation agenda depends largely on the purpose(s) for which the funds were set up. According to a section of interviewees, many pooled or intermediary funding mechanisms tend to focus on specific issues including anti-corruption, governance and child health to the neglect of others areas that are not considered as priority areas by donors:

So, let's say four donors decide to fund just anti-corruption. So, the question is, what happens to the person interested in female genital mutilation or health? I think that they [donors] seem to channel the bulk of resources towards a set objective rather than a large range of objectives. If that happens, it leaves behind so many other areas that local CSOs are interested but they simply cannot find funding for.

## 6.3 Mechanisms for addressing challenges associated with pooled or intermediary funding

Interviewees explained that in order to address the challenges associated with pooled or intermediary funding to enhance the localisation agenda and shift the power, there is the need for donors to be deliberate in allowing for flexibility in their funding conditions or requirements. For example, donors could have consultations with local CSOs to identify their needs and co-create funding conditions. This



will create a sense of local ownership of the funding and decision-making processes. Second, donors need to create multiple funding mechanisms that address issues at different sectors and levels. This also requires a better appreciation of the context within which CSOs operate and also the inclusion of different types of CSOs as partners. It was mentioned that pooled funding mechanisms need to support the provision of funding to different types of organisations irrespective of their size as explained by an interviewee:

**“I think creating such a pool of funds should also not be fixated on supporting big, large, well-established organisations [...] Donors should deliberately step out to look for small organisations and also respond to the local context [based on] what is required in different localities or contexts”.**

More importantly, there is also the need for a better appreciation of the power dynamics associated with the relationship between the donors and partners of pooled or intermediary funding mechanism. Thus, donors should be deliberate in understanding the contexts within which they operate rather than imposing or dictating to local organisations what needs to be done. There is therefore the need for co-creation of development interventions between donors and their partners to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of development interventions.



**“Pooled funding, I think is a really good funding model because it increases flexibility. It has a lot of strong potential as a mechanism to advance the localisation agenda and shift the power”.**







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## 7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This section presents a summary of the key findings and conclusions emerging from the study on aid localisation and African philanthropy. It further highlights the implications of the findings from the research for practice, focusing specifically on how the localisation and shift the power can be strengthened to achieve a more balanced power and flow of resources to CSOs in the Global South.

### 7.1 Summary of key findings

A key finding from the research is the high degree of awareness and knowledge on the part of African philanthropic organisations and CSOs regarding the localisation agenda. However, the study also found that while some interviewees demonstrated a sense of awareness about shift the power, this mainly focused on narratives such as Shifting the Power, Power Shifts and PowerShift that have been dominant in mainstream aid system. The findings further indicates that there is a relatively little awareness about #ShiftThePower compared to the mainstream narratives. For this reason, the understandings and meanings attributed to the localisation agenda and shift the power reflects the mainstream narratives within the aid system. First, the empirical evidence from the interviews conducted in this study has highlighted that the localisation agenda revolves around three key important issues: empowerment of local organisations, gathering support from below and creating spaces for local ownership and partnerships with local CSOs as leaders and coordinators of projects and programmes. The effective implementation of the localisation agenda has the potential to promote a well-balanced

power dynamic between Northern and Southern-based organisations, promote opportunities for co-creation of ideas and projects between global North organisations and Southern-based organisations, enhance credibility, foster equitable partnership, and increase organisational capacity. However, interviewees asserted that the actualisation of localisation agenda is yet to be realised in the Global South. Informed by this, concerns were also raised by a section of interviewees who argued for the need to change the narrative on the localisation agenda because of its emphasis on the structuring effects of the aid system rather than focusing on the agency of Southern-based organisations to address the constraints posed by the aid system on their operations. Thus, the localisation agenda was described as an outmoded concept with little or no relevance for Southern-based organisations because of its emphasis on changing the practices of organisations in the Global North such as donors and INGOs.

On the other hand, understandings of shift the power centred around efforts to alter the power dynamics inherent in the current humanitarian system by giving equal voice and full participation of organisations and intended beneficiaries in the Global South in agenda setting, decision making processes, local ownership, implementation and uptake of programme or project lessons. It also entails addressing power imbalances within and between governments and CSOs in the Global South. This is line with discourses such as those emphasised in notions of decolonising development and humanitarian action. The crucial role of African philanthropic organisations in promoting the shift the power and localisation agenda through advocating





for the mobilisation of domestic resources (i.e., financial and non-financial), and in actual fact, providing resources and infrastructure development for CSOs also emerged strongly. Nevertheless, much financial and non-financial support from African philanthropic organisations especially foundations established by HNWI and corporate organisations to local CSOs is often channelled to service delivery rather than to advocacy and social justice projects or programmes that challenge power existing structures and demand accountability from duty bearers.

Moreover, the findings further demonstrate that domestic resource mobilisation among local CSOs have been hampered the lack of leadership and capacity of local CSOs to mobilise domestic resources, as well as the legal, regulatory and socio-economic environment within which CSOs operate. Thus, the creation of enabling environment for African philanthropy to thrive, together with the building of technical and human resource capacity of CSOs will remain crucial in improving domestic resource mobilisation in promoting the localisation agenda and #ShiftThePower.

Overall, what emerges from this study is that while the localisation agenda and shift the power hold greater prospects to enhance resource flow, equitable partnership and balanced power with greater recognition of the value, knowledge, expertise and relevance of local organisations including CSOs in the global south, the ways in which the current humanitarian aid system is structured is likely to shape and affect the effective actualisation and realisation of the localisation agenda and shift the power. In fact, factors such as the unequal power relations between Global North actors and Southern-based organisations, the lack of recognition, respect and value of local actors, imposition of donor priorities on local actors, donors' preference for funding INGOs rather than local CSOs and the lack of local CSOs in agenda setting and decision making all have the potential to negatively influence and shape the effective implementation of the localisation agenda and shift the power narratives in the Global South. Additionally, the apparent limited engagement between African philanthropic organisations in particular, private foundations established by HNWI and corporate organisations and CSOs, the lack of resources for African philanthropic organisations to support a large number of local CSOs and the lack of an enabling environment that fosters or promotes local giving culture are key constraints

to realising the localisation agenda and shift the power. Notwithstanding, the empirical evidence from this study suggests that some grant making African philanthropic organisations including the AWDF, KCDF, NADef and STAR-Ghana Foundation have strong relationships with local CSOs (i.e., both bigger and smaller CSOs) especially through the provision of flexible funding arrangements. The provision of flexibility in funding arrangements helps in promoting #ShiftThePower.

The research further highlights the important roles that donors, governments and Southern-based organisations can play in promoting the localisation agenda and shift the power. For donors, the research has established the need for them to change their orientation and recognise Southern-based organisations as equal partners, accompanied by organisational learning into grant-making processes, establish flexible funding mechanisms including being transparent and making some conditionalities for INGOs to partner with local CSOs in funding applications, decision making and project implementation. The role of government as the research has demonstrated revolves around revisiting institutional, regulatory and policy frameworks that can enhance the ability of CSOs to mobilise domestic resources. The important role of capacity strengthening, networking, continuous learning, participation and strengthening of the voice of CSOs is fundamental in promoting the localisation agenda. In terms of the shift the power, the research found that advocacy through involvement in discussion and conversations on shift the power at the global and national levels, and participation in implementation of shift the power narratives in projects and programmes are two critical roles for Southern-based organisations.

The study also highlights that while pooled or intermediary funding mechanisms have the potential to promote shift the power, in many instances, it is inhibited by the lack of perceived flexibility especially with regards to funding arrangements. This creates challenges in ensuring local ownership which is a key tenet of shift the power. More importantly, pooled or intermediary funding mechanisms tend to focus on specific thematic issues which in turn affects the reach and scope of their interventions. Thus, many pooled or intermediary funding mechanisms are only able to reach a smaller number of organisations which negatively affects its impact and influence on CSOs' ecosystem.



Finally, the recent recognition of some donors in the Global North (e.g., Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) of localisation agenda and the shift the power should provide fertile ground to further develop mechanisms that can help ensure the promotion of the narratives. Based on these emerging findings from the research, the following overarching recommendations for practice are made.

## **7.2 Recommendations for practice: Efforts to promote the localisation agenda and shift the power**

### **Developing mechanisms to change asymmetrical power relations between donors and partners**

Firstly, the research found unequal power dynamics between donors and INGOs on one hand, and southern based organisations on the other hand, and this has been a defining characteristic of the humanitarian aid system for a prolong period of time. It is recommended for donors and INGOs to develop mechanisms to improve their relationship with Southern-based organisations to better recognise and respond to their leadership, value and respect local CSOs, as well as adapt accordingly their advocacy, media, community development or fundraising work. Among the strategies for promoting balanced relationship between donors and their partners in the Global South include ensuring mutual trust and respect and also recognising the context within which Southern-based organisations operate. This would ensure the promotion of long-term relationships built on trust and respect which will help in addressing the inherent power imbalances donor-CSO relationships.

### **Increasing awareness and education on the localisation agenda and shift the power**

Secondly, although the research has established high degree of awareness of the localisation agenda and shift the power narrative, it was also evident that some informants interviewed had little understanding and further even pointed to the fact that many CSOs in the Global South are highly not aware nor understand these important concepts. In fact, there was a conflation of the localisation agenda and shift the power by many interviewees in this study. In this regard, it is recommended that leading organisations championing the concepts intensify research and awareness campaigns among all CSOs at the global, national and local levels. Such efforts could focus on the practical meaning of shift the power narratives (e.g., shifting the power, power shifts and #ShiftThePower) and localisation agenda,

as way to bring to attention the relevance of these concepts particularly for the work of CSOs in the global support. This will help improve understanding, and also help mobilise local CSOs to understand and champion these concepts in their work to help contribute to transformation of the CSO sector.

### **Capacity Strengthening for Southern-based organisations**

Thirdly, the research also establishes that there are inherent challenges facing Southern-based organisations which affect their own programming, activities and organisational sustainability and in turn limits the prospects of engendering structural transformation to realise the goal of ensuring balanced power and flow of resources to the global south organisations. In this regard, it is recommended that a CSO-sector wide response, transformation and re-orientation is also needed to engender change and promote the localisation and shift the power agenda. Based on the research findings, we recommend that strengthening capacity in areas such as proposal development, networking, continuous organisational learning and accountability and transparency are all crucial for CSOs in the Global South if the goal of promoting the localisation agenda and shift the power could be realised. More importantly, there is the need for capacity strengthening in domestic resource mobilisation for Southern-based organisations. This also requires deliberate efforts by donors and CSOs' leadership to invest in building capacity to tap into various sources of domestic resources to fund humanitarian work and ensure organisational sustainability.

### **Creating enabling environment for local philanthropy**

This study highlights that domestic resource mobilisation has the potential to promote the localisation and shift the power agenda by making organisations become more flexible, autonomy and also accountable to intended beneficiaries. This enhances their credibility and legitimacy. However, in many countries, the mechanisms for creating the enabling environment for domestic resource mobilisation including local philanthropy is largely absent due to the lack of legal and regulatory frameworks. There is therefore the need for the creation of an enabling environment where governments provide the needed support infrastructure for promoting local philanthropy.



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